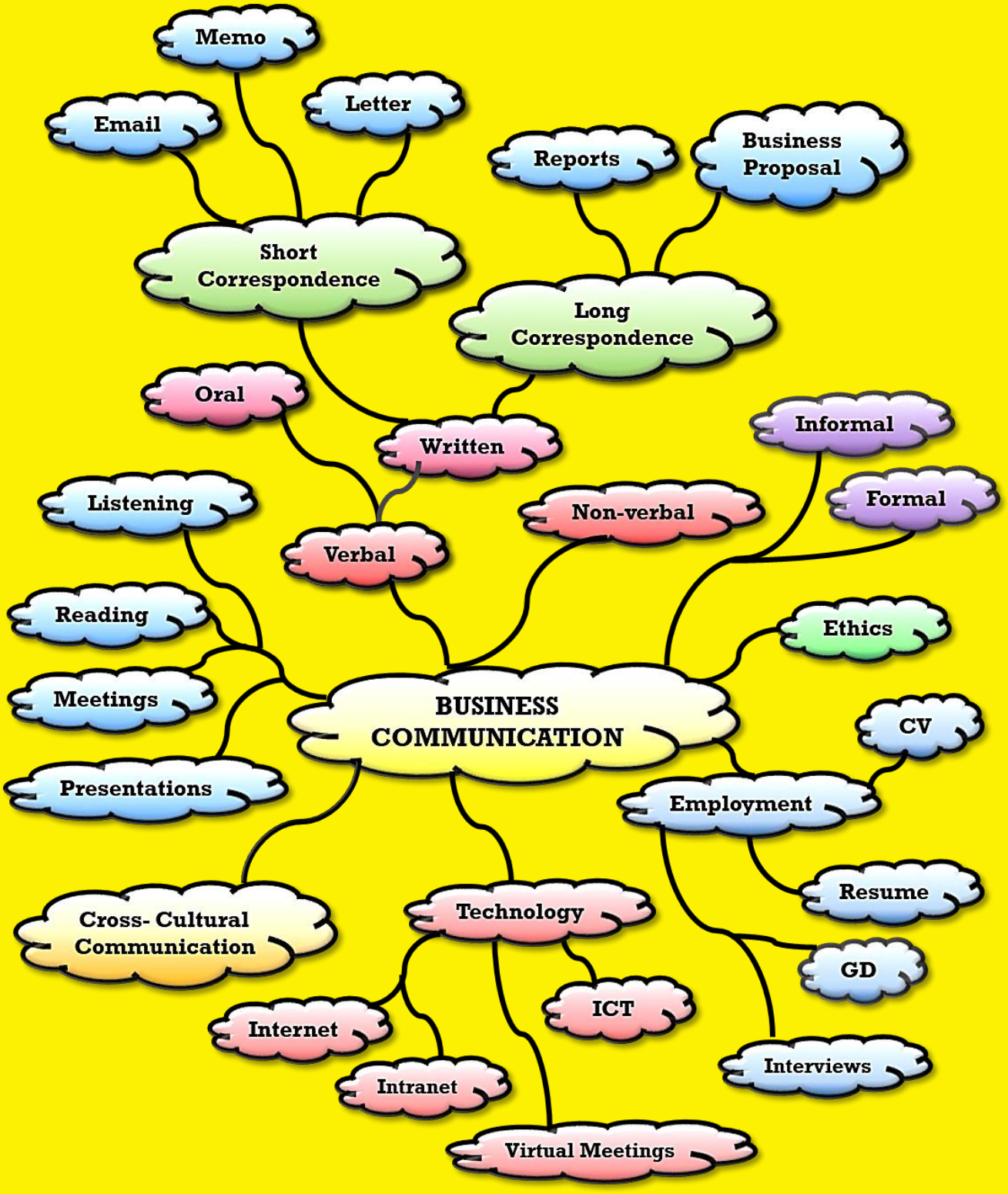
Indira Gandhi National Open University
School of Management Studies

MMPC-007



BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

School of Management Studies

MMPC-007
BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

BLOCK 1

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUINCATION **5**

BLOCK 2

ORAL COMMUNICATION AT WORK **69**

BLOCK 3

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION AT WORK **135**

BLOCK 4

COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATION **199**

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MMPC 007: BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Dear learners,

Communication in one form or the other has been an integral part of our lives since ages. Business Communication helps the employer and employee to share the thoughts, get the work done and professionally achieve new heights in the business world, communication can be oral and written. It can be formal and informal. Oral communication can be in the form of listening, reading which involves effective interpersonal communication techniques. Meetings are an integral part of any organisation so proper communication in meetings play an important role. Written communication can be in the form of letters, memos, reports etc. These play an important role at the workplace. Technology and ethics is another important aspect which needs to be understood while discussing communication. This course focuses on these aspects.

The course is divided into four blocks and has 15 units in all. The course outline is given below.

Block 1 : Introduction to Communication

Unit 1 : Basics of Communication

Unit2 : Process of Communication

Unit 3 : Types of Communication

Unit4 : Forms of Communication at Workplace

Block 2 : Oral Communication at Work

Unit 5 : Listening and Reading Skills

Unit6 : Interpersonal Communication

Unit 7 : Communication in Meetings

Unit 8 : Presentation Skills

Block 3 : Written Communication at Work

Unit 9 : Basics of Written Business Communication

Unit 10 : Short Business Correspondence

Unit 11 : Long Business Correspondence

Block 4 : Communication in Organisation

Unit 12 : Communication for Employment

Unit13 : Technology and Communication

Unit 14 : Cross Cultural Communication

Unit15 : Ethics in Communication

The learning objectives of this course are to understand:

- The meaning of communication and the process of communication;
- The different types of communication;
- The need and importance of oral communication at workplace;
- The written communication at work which includes the short and long business correspondence;
- The communication techniques used for employment
- The relationship of technology with communication and;
- The role of ethics and values in communication.

BLOCK 1

INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

BLOCK I INTRODUCTION TO COMMUNICATION

This block introduces you to the basics of communication. This is divided into four units.

Unit 1: Basics of Communication: This unit discusses the evolution of communication in human society and how the present form of communication is developed. The unit explains the meaning of communication and tries to differentiate between general and business communication through a case study. It also discusses 7C's of communication which will give you an idea how the communication process works.

Unit2: Process of Communication: This unit discusses the process of communication and explains the roles of sender and receiver in the process of communication. The unit also discusses different types of barriers of communication and how they can be overcome. The unit also discusses the importance of feedback in the communication process.

Unit 3: Types of Communication: This unit focusses on different types of communication like oral and written which are commonly used for business purpose.

Unit4: Forms of Communication at Workplace: This unit describes different forms of communication like formal and informal communication and their sub classifications. The whole unit will give an idea about various forms of communication used in different contexts.

UNIT 1 BASICS OF COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Comprehend the role of business communication in business enterprises;
- Analyse the important dimensions of business communication;
- Understand how characters communicate verbally and non-verbally through a case study.

Structure

1.1 Introduction

1.2 Evolution of Communication

1.3 Elements of Communication

1.4 Difference between General and Business Communication

1.5 Purpose of Business Communication

1.6 Profile of an Effective Communicator: A Case Study

1.7 The " You Attitude"

1.8 Important Dimensions of Business Communication

1.9 Use of proper language

1.10 7C's of Communication

1.11 Summary

1.12 Keywords

1.13 Self-Assessment Questions

1.14 Further Readings

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the most essential skills. It is very important to understand the nuances of communication. In this unit, we will be discussing how the communication in its present form evolved. We will study the differentiation between general and business communication.

We know that communication is important in an organisation. While working in a business enterprise we interact with superiors, co-workers and subordinates, converse one on one, or over the intercom or phone and read and write emails, letters, business reports and proposals. All these activities have one thing in common – the sharing of information.

No business enterprise or organisation can function without communication. Communication is at the centre of all business activities. The better our communication skills, the greater our chances of success.

Our business acumen and degrees can be of little use in a working environment without proper communication. For example, although one may have an excellent academic record, one may not be successful in a placement interview if one is not able to convey one's concepts and ideas successfully to the interviewers. Most successful entrepreneurs and managers in the business world have superb communication skills.

1.2 EVOLUTION OF COMMUNICATION

Communication is a way to interact with others. It is an integral part of our lives. A proper communication results in proper understanding. Communication techniques have evolved over the years or say ages and are a continuous process. In this section, we will see as to how communication has evolved with times. Communication is a process which involves exchange of interaction or relaying an expression with the help of words or signs. Every day we come across different focus of communication be it writing or talking or listening. It is very important to communicate effectively so as to convey the message clearly. There are different types of communication viz. verbal and non-verbal. We Will discuss these in detail in unit 3. Let us now learn how the communication in its present form evolved.

Cave paintings

Since age's humans have been using different ways to communicate. One of the oldest methods of communication is cave paintings. Cave paintings are just not paintings instead they conveyed a specific message like making the territories, recording major events etc. The paintings were represented in the form of symbols.

Communication through Symbols

Our ancestors had a certain way of communicating through different signs and symbols. Petroglyphs (rock carvings) were created around 10,000 B.C. These were the carvings on the rocks which depicted a story. Then the ideograms (for example numerals) were developed. Later the characters were created and lastly the alphabets were created which was a landmark in the communication process.

Smoke Signals

In early ages, people depended on elements to communicate. Smoke signals were one of the forms to transmit a message.

Carrier Pigeons

This was one of the popular methods of sending the written messages through the pigeons who became the carriers of the message. The Carrier pigeons acted like 'postal service' and had a major role to play in World War I & II.

Postal System

During ancient times, Egyptians used the courier services to send the official orders (decrees). India, China, Rome and Persia too had an organized postal

system. The first mail box system and delivery of paid envelopes was started in Paris way back in 1653.

Print

First printing press was developed by the Germans in 1440 and it brought a radical change in the communication process. In the 16th century newspapers came into existence.

Radio

After the print communication technique took a new turn and wireless power evolved as one of the forms to transmit messages. Radio broadcasting started in 1893.

Telegraph

Telegraph communication was a revolution in long-distance communication. Morse code was developed by Samuel Morse which was a series of clicks, tones and lights to transmit the message. The first telegraph message was sent in 1844.

Telephone

The invention of the telephone became a major form of verbal communication and till date it is the most reliable form of communication.

Television

Then came television which, like telephone, is an integral part of our lives. Television is a mode of indirect communication.

Internet

The 1950s saw the emergence of computers which now has become the major source of communication. This saw the technology penetrating considerably in the communication process. The year 1973 saw the emergence of the term ‘Internet’ which now is the most used term.

E-mail

Emails or the electronic mails have now become an integral form of communication in the personal as well as professional lives.

Text Message

Text messages are another mode of communication which is short and fast and uses a data network.

Social Media

This is the latest mode of communication and has digitized the world. The use of social media platforms has brought the world closer. During the pandemic this has been one of the most popular modes to transmit messages.

Communication over the ages has gone through lots of transformation. Today it has become quite convenient and efficient to communicate.

Activity 1

Think about the way you communicate in your daily life. List any three modes of communication which you use frequently.

a) …….

b) …….

c) …….

1.3 ELEMENTS OF COMMUNICATION

In activity 1 you have listed three modes of communication which you frequently use. Now assess that whenever you communicate, whether it was effective or it relayed a proper/ appropriate message or not. The answer would probably be 'No'. This is where we need to understand the meaning of communication and what are the different elements which can make a communication effective.

Definition

Communication as a word has been derived from the Latin word '*communicationis*' which means 'to share'. To define communication it can be said that 'it is an act of purposefully and actively exchanging information between two or more people to send or receive a message through a shared system of signs and symbols.' In section 1.5 you will see how a communication develops or takes place between two people.

The basic elements of communication are as follows:

- Source
- Message
- Channels
- Receiver
- Environment
- Context
- Interference

These elements form the whole process of communication which we will learn in detail in Unit 2.

1.4 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GENERAL AND BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

We now know that communication deals with transfer of information from one person to the other. When we talk about business communication it

relates with business related areas/topics. It is derived from general communication related to business activities. General communication deals with day to day or general topics which may or may not be specific in nature. The difference between the two lies in the nature of the communication. Table 1 shows the difference between the two.

Table 1: Business Communication versus General Communication

	Business Communication	General Communication
Format	It uses a specific format for communication.	It uses varied formats for communication.
Category	It is usually formal in nature.	It involves personal touch.
Extent/Reach	It usually is practical & unbiased.	It can be vast and can be fictitious and biased, at times.
Demonstration/ Presentation	It specifically follows the norms and procedures of the organisation.	It is informal and different methods can be used.
Aim/Intention	It focuses on the aim of the organisation.	It does not have a focus.
Kind/ nature/Pattern	It is official in nature.	It is personal in nature.
Feedback	This requires feedback.	Feedback may not be important.

Activity 2

Identify the following as business or general communication:

a) Communicating the attrition report to the HR Manager.

b) Poor communication leads to conflict.

c) Top management communicates the rules and procedures to be followed in routine activities.

d) She seems to have some communication problems.

……

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……

1.5 PURPOSE OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Business communication plays a key role in a business enterprise or industry. All managerial or administrative activities involve communication, be it

planning, organizing, recruiting, coordinating or decision making. Communication serves as a means to measure the success or growth of an organisation.

Participation in the communication process involves developing skills in collecting and organizing information, analyzing and evaluating facts, appreciating the difference between facts and inferences, and communicating effectively.

Communication is successful only when the purpose is fulfilled. The purpose of communication may be to inform, persuade, or motivate a desired action. In each situation/case, there is a positive change intended to be brought out in the audience/listener or the receiver of the communication-change of attitude or perception, or belief in the target audience in a desired manner. So, in the ultimate analysis all business communication is manipulative, purposive and goal-directed. Therefore, the measure of communication effectiveness depends on the extent to which the final goal is achieved.

1.6 PROFILE OF AN EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATOR: A CASE STUDY

Let us now understand the profile of an effective communicator through a case study.

The Case of the Less Expensive Customer

[Sunday: 1.00 p.m. The showroom of Fitwell Shoes in Phoenix Mall! Mr. X and Mrs. X enter holding a box of Fitwell shoes. Mr. X is a Vice President with a multinational company. He is wearing a bright orange T shirt, olive green bermudas and sandals. Mrs. X is wearing a light pink saree. She has a shopping bag and a small purse. Mr. X enters the shop first as Mrs. X stops outside for window shopping. On entering the shop he is greeted by Mr. A, the young sales executive trainee who is sent from headquarters for training.]

Mr. A: Good morning Sir! How can I help you?

Mr. X: Well I had bought this pair of shoes last Sunday and only worn them once, I feel that they are seconds (Tries to hand over the box to Mr. A, who has his hands behind his back)

Mr. A: Sir, seconds are not stocked in this showroom.

Mr. X: (opening the box of shoes) It struck me here itself but I liked the colour and perhaps overlooked it. The stripes on the two shoes do not match. It seems to be a manufacturing defect.

Mr. A: (Looking at the shoes but still with his hands behind his back). Sir, this is the way they are designed. It is not a manufacturing defect.

Mr. X: (Trying to hand over the shoes to Mr. A to have a look) This can’t be the design. It is an alignment defect and it looks like a “seconds” pair.

Mr. A: (Still not taking the pair) Sir, I can show you other pairs also. They are all designed the same way. (He asks a shop assistant to get a couple of pairs of the same make, and moves on to attend to other customers. When he returns after about five minutes, he finds Mr. X trying a different pair). See, I said that they are all made the same way. It is the design, not a manufacturing defect.

Mr. X: Then I have a feeling this showroom is selling defective pieces. They are not from fresh stock.

Mr. A: I told you as a policy, we do not keep any "seconds" in the showroom. In fact, we don't have much "seconds" stock because our production line is most modern.

Mr. X: (Picking up his pair of shoes) Anyway, I want to return them. I don't want to wear a defective pair. And then you tell me that I can't return it. What kind of shop is this?

Mr. A: (looking grim but speaking steadily) Sir, I told you they are not defective. Secondly you have already used them. How can I take them back?

[At this moment Mr. G, the manager of the showroom, comes from his cabin, notices them and walks to Mr. X]

Mr. G: May, I help you gentleman?

Mr. A: He is Mr….. (Trying to introduce Mr. X)

Mr. X: (Interrupting Mr. A) I'm Mr. X, I bought this pair (showing him the shoes) last week from your showroom. I find that there is something wrong with the design (points to the toes). In fact, a couple of my friends pointed it out.

Mr. G: Did you notice this while buying them?

Mr. X: I noticed this but didn't bother much.

Mr. G: Why?

Mr. X: Maybe I was concentrating on the colour.

Mr. G: Well, Mr. X, this is no design or manufacturing defect. On the contrary they are made to look this way. You can see all of them (pointing at the pairs lying on the floor) have the same pattern.

Mr. X: But they look old. And, I don't want to wear something that looks like seconds.

Mr. G: We don't have a policy of….

Mr. X: (Interrupting him) Then, I am leaving them here (drops the pair on the floor). Please do whatever you want with them.

Mr. G: (Looking down at the pair for a while) do you have a receipt?

Mr. X: (Searching for a while in his wallet and the box of shoes). Let me check with my wife (and turn to look for her; she is coming towards them). Do you have the receipt for these shoes?

Mrs. X: No, I don't think you gave it to me (and starts looking into her purse) No.

Mr. X: I don't know. I may have left it at home.

Mr. G: Please give us a moment (and ask Mr. A to accompany him to his cabin).

Mrs. X: What are they saying?

Mr. X: They don't have a policy of taking sold goods back.

Mrs. X: I told you, they won't take them back.

Mr. X: Is it? They will have to take them back.

[In the meanwhile Mr. A emerges from behind the shop and approaches Mr. X]

Mr. A: See, we will have to check with our head office regarding this. You may find out after two days.

Mr. X: I can't come on weekdays.

Mr. A: Then, next Sunday?

Mr. X: But I have other things to do on Sunday.

Mr. A: Then you can find out over the phone (and gives him a card with a phone number).

Mr. X: (instead of taking the card he takes out his own business card from his wallet and gives it to Mr. A) Why don't you inform me?

Mr. A: Sure we will. But in case we are not able to get through to you,you could also try.

Mr. X: (Reluctantly) Ok (takes the card and turns to leave).

Mr. A: (Picking up the pair from the floor). You may keep them with you in the meanwhile.

Mr. X: (Moving back towards him). What will I do with them?

Mr. A: Sir, until and unless I have heard from our head office, I can't keep them here. Secondly in the absence of any receipt, they might get misplaced.

Mr. X: (looking hard at him and thinking for a while) O.K. but do let me know soon.

Mr. A: (Packing the pair back in its box and handing it over to him) sure.

[On the advice of Mr. G, the next day, Mr. A speaks to Mr. V, General Manager (Sales) at the headquarters. Mr. V asks him to fax the details. Mr. A sends the following communication]

Dear Sir,

A customer, Mr. X, wants to return a pair of shoes, which he had bought from the showroom a week back. He claims that there is a manufacturing defect in the design. In fact, he is accusing us of selling seconds from this shop. Mr. G and I tried to convince him about our policies; but all in vain. Finally, to prevent him from creating an ugly scene, we promised we would let him know our decision after consulting the head office. I have also been successful in convincing him to take the pair back with him. But he will certainly want a reply from us within a couple of days. Please advise.

Regards,

Mr. A

[The following day being Monday, Mr. A leaves the town on an official tour. On Tuesday morning Mr. G finds the following message from Mr. V on the fax machine.]

"If he is a ₹ 4500/- customer, don't ask questions, give him a new pair and salute him. But if he is a ₹ 1250/- customer, then tell him clearly that it is not possible".

Please remember that the customer is king; but kings are also big and small and rich and poor.

In this case study who is the most effective communicator? And why?

Most readers would consider Mr. A to be the most effective communicator. Why?

Mr. A is convincing, polite, calm, flexible, smart, clever, uses proper gestures, gives options, behaves as a professional sales person- his communication is audience conscious. He knows what, when, and how much to say.

1.7 THE "YOU ATTITUDE"

An important dimension of business communication is the "you" attitude of the speaker. The interest of the listener/receiver must be the informing principle of the message. Mr. A observes this by finally making the reluctant Mr. X keep back the pair, till they hear from the head office. Mr. X would not have Mr. A's first reason, that is, hearing back from head office, for taking back the pair. But the second reason is that the shoes may get misplaced in the absence of a receipt that motivates Mr. X effectively.

Mr. A is successful in manipulating the whole situation effectively through his ability to communicate effectively not just from his point of view but from the listener's point of view too.

Mr. A's audience directed communication is seen also in his assurance to inform Mr. X on the phone but, he convinces Mr. X to also try to contact the showroom to negate the possibility of their not getting through.

An important aspect of Mr. A's communication is its tone of sincerity. The message must be perceived by the audience as a true and reliable statement of intentions.

1.8 IMPORTANT DIMENSIONS OF BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

The most central player in this case study is Mr. X. He is confident and persistent. He has the air of a well-dressed, relaxed multinational company executive. But he is not able to keep his cool while pressing his point. He flashes up. Instead of being a persuasive communicator, he tries to force the issue.

To some extent Mr. X's attitude is reflected in his dress, choice of colours (bright orange and olive green) and the style of shorts (Bermuda) and sandals (casual). He is equally casual in his arguments. He jumps from one argument to another. First the manufacturing defect, then "seconds", and finally his own choice of not wearing something that looks odd. Mr. X's argument that he had noticed it but did not bother much is not very convincing. Moreover, if he did not bother much, then why should he accept other people's observations?

Mr. X's approach and attitude are marked by his sense of being a customer; a buyer who he assumes always enjoys a superior voice in a deal. He himself is a Vice President in a multinational company. But, he lacks the most important dimensions of communication—coherence, logic and tone of persuasive reasoning. His conversation with Mrs. X, who claims to have told him that "they won't take them back" shows that he believes that things can be forced. In contrast to Mr. X's expressions we see that Mr. A makes categorical statements that are assertive in nature. The difference is a statement made by them is obvious and it lies in the nature of the language used by those two speakers.

M. X has completely failed as an effective communicator.

1.9 USE OF PROPER LANGUAGE

One of the very basic dimensions of effective communication is the knowledge and use of proper language for a specific purpose. Just as communication is always purposive, language is also purposive. Therefore we have to study the relation between language and the purpose of its use. The purpose can be to inform, to persuade, to create or to argue one can use language by combining some of these purposes- one can inform as well as persuade.

Some learners may think that, as a communicator, Mr. G was more successful than others. For, he is clear, both about his role and purpose. He is polite, firm and a better listener. Listening is also an effective form of communicating. Not communicating deliberately is as in Mr. G's case, also purposive. He is strategic in his role to help resolve the problem at the conflicting stage. As a strategy, he does not exactly contradict Mr. X's complaint. He does not begin by telling Mr. X that he was wrong, that there was no manufacturing defect in the particular pair bought by him. Instead in a soft manner, he asks Mr. X, "you had not seen it at the time of buying them". And he put in his "why?" but only after first giving Mr. X a chance to tell his point. That shows Mr. G as a questioning communicator.

Mr. G knows the strategy of effective communication. He does not contradict. He does not go about convincing Mr. X that there was no design or manufacturing defect. On the contrary he points out that it was a deliberate patterned shape.

Mr. G's communication strategy is to be noted. He does not directly tell Mr. X that it was not a "seconds" pair. Instead he responds impersonally. He politely informs Mr. X about the company's policy. This impersonal communication is best suited to negative situations.

Another strategy used by Mr. G is to divert the topic discussion or contention at a crucial juncture. When Mr. X dumps the pair on the floor telling Mr. G and Mr. A to do whatever they want to do with them, he is clearly frustrated and feeling helpless. Here Mr. G makes the psychological move from the shoes to the receipt when Mr. X says that he does not have the receipt with him Mr. G dramatically withdraws from the scene taking Mr. A with him. In doing so he gives the impression to Mr. X that he is going along with Mr. A to discuss how they can help him. By creating a time gap in the communication, Mr. G enables Mr. A to return with the final resolution of the situation.

A few learners may consider Mr. V to be the most effective communicator. He is brief, has clarity of policy; is humorous and decisive, certain and firm and above all, is prompt and unimposing in his role as a final adviser in the case. He offers specific guidelines to be followed by Mr. A according to the status of the customer.

The other perspective is that Mr. V is professional in his advice. He communicates as a senior to a junior and should use assertive sentences. His advice to Mr. A appears to be an order rather than a piece of simple advice. He uses jargon to justify his discrimination between rich and poor customers 'customer is King' is a cliché. But Mr. V's shrewdness is communicated through his use of Jargon to apply common sense to marketing policy: A big and rich king to be saluted and the small and poor king to be simply shown the door.

The final character in the case is Mrs. X; she shares a brief verbal communication in the situation. But we get to know a lot about her through

her non-verbal communication mode. For example, Mrs. X chooses to stay away from the scene of dialogue. Her silence is deliberate. For it communicates that she knew that it would be of no purpose to try to return the pair.

Her clothes and purse communicate her purpose of coming out with her husband. She had come with him to do her own shopping. Her decision to stay out for a while appeared to be for some window-shopping. But, in the context of the situation, her staying away seems to be a deliberate decision to allow Mr. X to speak for himself. For, she herself was not of the view that the shoes could be returned. Mrs. X uses short assertive sentences. She is factual. She thinks and speaks more like Mr. A than Mr. X.

Mr. A's ability to communicate in writing is seen in his fax to Mr. V. In this fax, the details of the incident, which was all oral communication, are put in written communication. It gives an accurate account of the incident. It is brief and to the point. Its language is simple and conversational. Its short sentences give the expression a certain raciness, a smooth flow of ideas. The use of connectives such as 'in fact' 'finally' and 'but', gives his writing coherence and logic.

Mr. A's written communication is a factual reporting of the incident in a single chronologically organized paragraph, Mr. A is able to convey the total situation accurately as it happened, developed and what the pending decision was.

All the characters in the case study communicate verbally and non-verbally. Verbally we find spoken and written forms of communication used to exchange thoughts, inform, argue, convince, advise and instruct. But verbal communication is given full force and meaning by the personality of the communicator. The speaker's dress, gestures, body language, tone, clarity of approach, understanding of the subject matter of the communication, silence, humor, assertiveness and aggressiveness-all combine to constitute the personality of the communicator in a certain context and relationship with the receiver or audience determining the sense of the total message communicated.

Further, the effectiveness of communication depends upon the kind of personality that communicates. When a communicator chooses certain words and organisation of words and not others, s/he projects a personality with a particular center of concern and relation to the person he is addressing. Such self-dramatisation in language is known as style. The speaker or writer, according to his personality chooses his style of verbal and non-verbal communication to purposely establish a particular center of interest and relationship with his/her audience. In other words, his/her entire act of communication is the index of his/her mind, thoughts, concerns and attitude towards his/her audience himself and his/her subject. It can be said that his/her whole personality is at work when s/he seeks to perform as an effective communicator.

1.10 7 C'S OF COMMUNICATION

In the business world effective communication is the key to success. An effective communication is applicable to both oral as well as written communication. It is therefore very important to understand 7C's of communication which help in conveying important messages effectively in turn increasing employee engagement and productivity. The 7C's of communication are:

1) Clarity
2) Correctness
3) Conciseness
4) Courtesy
5) Concreteness
6) Consideration
7) Completeness

We will discuss each one of them one by one.

1) **Clarity:** This means that a specific message has been sent instead of trying to send too many messages at one particular time. This involves use of simple and precise services. The following are the features of clarity.

   - Clear understanding
   - Clarity of thoughts and ideas
   - Use of simple, appropriate and precise words

2) **Correctness:** Use of correct language, grammar, data etc. is very important to communicate the message clearly. The features of correctness are:

   - Timely, exact and correct message
   - Confidence Booster
   - Greater impact on the audience

3) **Conciseness:** This means communicating using minimum but appropriate words. It has the following features:

   - Time saving
   - Avoids excessive usage of unnecessary words
   - Short and limited
   - Appealing and comprehensible
   - Non- repeatable

4) **Courtesy:** This is one of the important C's of communication as it shows the respect, politeness, judicious behaviour to the other party in turn creating goodwill. It has the following features:

- Consideration of the feelings of the audience
- Positive and focused
- Unbiased

5) **Concreteness:** As the term suggests it is specific, meaningful and clear and avoids ambiguity and double-meaning. This has the following features:

   - Supports facts and figures
   - Clear and precise
   - Avoids misinterpretation

6) **Consideration:** This implies that the audience is taken into consideration in terms of his/her view points, culture, mind-set, values etc. The features of this are:

   - Stresses on 'you' approach
   - Empathetic
   - Optimistic

7) **Completeness:** The last C of communication is completeness. As the term suggests it means that any communication be it personal or professional should be complete. It should deliver all the facts and information required to send the message to the receiver. It has the following features:

   - Builds reputation of the organisation
   - Cost saving
   - Removes the barriers of vague information
   - Helps in better decision-making.

   We have learnt 7 C's of communication and it is quite clear that communication is one of the most initial skills that should be practiced.

Activity 3

Write an example for each of the 7 C's of effective communication.

7C's of Communication	Example
Clarity	
Correctness	
Conciseness	
Courtesy	
Concreteness	
Consideration	
Completeness	

1.11 SUMMARY

In this unit we have discussed the evolution of communication, definition and the specific purpose of communication. Communication has evolved over a period of time. It started with the symbols and in the present times technology has penetrated to a large extent in the way we communicate. The way we communicate depends to a large extent on our attitude and beliefs. There is a distinction between business communication and general communication. The distinction between the two lies in terms of format, category, extent, presentation, aims, nature and feedback. The dimensions of communication and the use of proper language has been discussed through the case study. We have also learnt the 7 C's of communication which are: Clarity, Correctness, Conciseness, Courtesy, Concreteness, Consideration and Completeness. This helps us in understanding the way one should communicate to make the communication effective.

1.12 KEYWORDS

Communication: The act of transmitting ideas, thoughts or information from one person to another.

Business Communication: It refers to communication related to business activities.

Concreteness: It is an aspect of communication where a message should be definite and specific.

Courtesy: It is an act of showing respect and politeness in one's behaviour toward others.

1.13 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Discuss the role of business communication in business enterprises.
2) Analyse the "you" attitude as an important dimension of business communication.
3) "Communication is successful only when the purpose is fulfilled". Explain.
4) "Listening is also an important form of communication." Discuss
5) Explain the verbal and non-verbal forms of business communication.

1.14 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

Chaturvedi, P.D. & Chaturvedi, M. (2006). *Business communication: Concepts, Cases and Applications*. Pearson.

Raman, M.& Sharma, S. (2016). *Technical Communication: Principles and Practices*. OUP.

Sharma, R.C. &Moha, K. (2002). *Business Correspondence and Report Writing*. Tata Mcgraw Hill.

UNIT 2 PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the Two Way Communication Process;
- Comprehend the barriers to communication;
- Understand ways to overcome barriers to communication.

Structure

2.1 Introduction

2.2 Linear Concept of Communication

2.3 Shannon – Weaver Model of Communication

2.4 Two – Way Communication Process

2.5 Barriers to Communication

2.6 Intrapersonal Barriers

2.7 Interpersonal Barriers

2.8 Organisational Barriers

2.9 Case Study

2.10 Summary

2.11 Keywords

2.12 Self-Assessment Questions

2.13 References and Further Readings

2.1 INTRODUCTION

As we know that communication is one of the most integral parts of any individual or an organisation. There is a specific way to communicate effectively. Therefore, it is important for us to understand the process of human communication so as to avoid the common errors which take place in a communication. This unit discusses different models of communication to understand the process. There can be a one way communication and a two way communication. We will discuss different models to help us develop an understanding of how communication flows. Apart from these models we will also discuss the barriers to communication.

2.2 LINEAR CONCEPT OF COMMUNICATION

The following five fundamental questions are asked in the early stages of communication:

- Who says?
- What is said?
- Where is it said?

- To whom it is said?
- With what effect it is said?

The transmission of information from a sender to a recipient is considered to be a one-way process of communication.A receiver passively receives the message and acts as directed or requested by the sender, according to the linear perspective. The goal of communication is to manipulate or control the receiver. It is assumed that the message reaches the receiver intact and unchanged as it travels through the medium chosen by the sender. Figure 1 below gives the Linear View of communication.

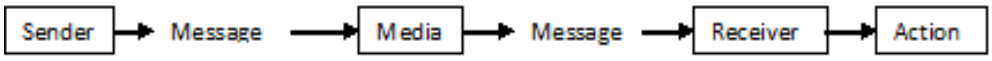

Figure 1: The Linear View

2.3 SHANNON -WEAVER MODEL OF COMMUNICATION

C.E. Shannon and W. Weaver were among the first to point out that messages may be altered or blocked in the process of communication.Shannon's communication model is based on a mathematical or mechanical understanding of the communication process, with the fundamental issue being that the message received does not equal the message sent. Noise, he said, was to blame for the gap. Later in 1949, the Shannon model was published in a mathematical theory of communication co-authored by Weaver. Weaver pioneered the use of feedback as a noise reduction technique. The Shannon-Weaver model, on the other hand, did not consider feedback to be an essential component since it saw communication as a linear process with feedback as a separate act of communication. Therefore, in the Shannon-Weaver model, a dotted line is used to represent feedback (figure 2).

The concept is predicated on the notion that communication takes place only after the message has been received, and that it should be received as intact as possible. Of course, this is a theoretical notion of perfect communication. In real life, filters in both the sender's and receiver's minds influence the meaning of the message. Feedback, to some extent, corrects any distortions and tends to complete the communication cycle.Figure 2 shows the Shannon-Weaver model of communication.

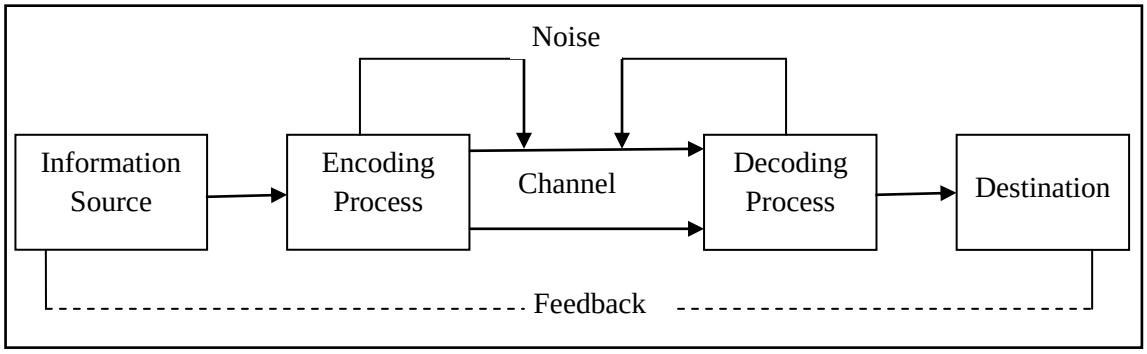

Figure 2: Shannon-Weaver Model

Figure 3 represents the process of communication which has the following steps:

Source of Information (ideation)

The information source is the first step in the communication process. The sender has some unprocessed data. His/her goal is to turn the data into a message that can be shared. The information source of the communication process is the source of a message.

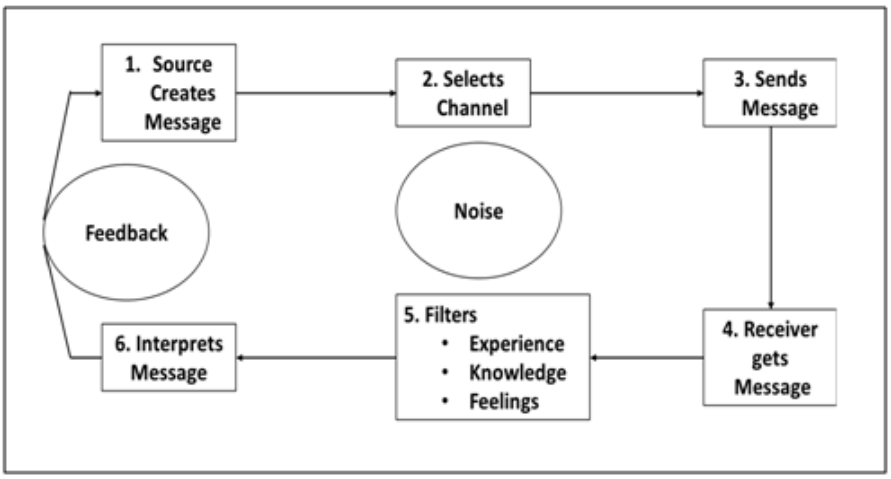

Figure 3: Process of Communication

Encoding

The sender composes the message after giving it some thought (verbal symbols or any other symbolic form of expression). Encoding is the term for this procedure.

Channel of Transmission

A channel is a suitable medium for sending a message, such as orally, in writing, electronically, in code, or via a signaling system.

Decoding

Decoding involves receiving, comprehending, and interpreting the message. This is how a recipient receives the message.

Acting

The communication process comes to a close when the receiver acts on an interpreted message, just as the sender intended.

As a result, we can observe that communication completes a full circle, bringing the sender and receiver together as two sides of the same coin. Modern management considers communication to be a vital ability for successful managers because of its uniting process and role.

Noise

This mechanism is susceptible to noise, which can obstruct or distort communication, preventing the message from being sent from the transmitter to the receiver.

Noise, according to certain communication theorists, refers to extrinsic disturbances in the physical environment around the act of communication, such as poor audio quality, phone dropouts, bad printouts, or unreadable writing.

Filters

Filters are responsible for communication distortion induced by subjective elements such as the sender's and receiver's attitudes. These are psychological in nature. Attitudes, beliefs, experiences, self-awareness, and the ability to think coherently are among them. As the sender's communication travels through the receiver's filters, which are made up of his/her experience, knowledge, and sentiments, misinterpretations and other issues may occur.

2.4 TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION PROCESS

Communication is now viewed as a two-way process in later conceptualizations of the process. The receiver also serves as the sender of feedback to the transmitter to complete the communication cycle (sender). As in telemarketing or call centre communication, both the sender and the recipient play a reciprocal and reversible role.

The two-way approach is more modern. It views communication as primarily a reciprocal process involving the exchange of messages. Because the sender (source) and receiver (receiver) are often the same individual, there is no clear separation between the two positions.

The sender is considered as the determiner of the message's meaning in the previous linear perspective. The two-way notion incorporates the receiver as an active participant in the message's development and interpretation. The message is how the recipient interprets it based on his or her own experiences, beliefs, and feelings. People who have worked together and formed common attitudes and perspectives with regard to the organisation they work in or the community they live in may have common interpretations of circumstances, ideas, strategies, and events. Transactional communication is another name for two-way communication. We will also study the transaction model in detail in unit 6. The flow of two-way communication is depicted in Figure 4.

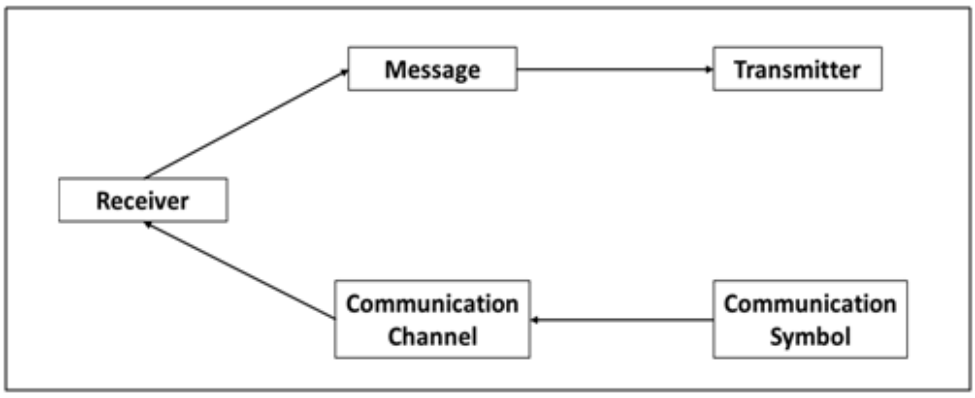

Figure 4: Two-Way Communication Flow

2.5 BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

In any type of communication process there are certain barriers which need to be understood so that they can be removed or avoided to make the communication process effective.A barrier works like a sieve, allowing just a portion of the message to get through, preventing the intended reaction. You must understand how barriers work, why they generate misconceptions, and how to reduce their negative effects in order to communicate easily and successfully in a company, regardless of your position. How many times have you said, "I intended to say this but didn't!" or "I meant to say that but didn't!" Communication obstacles arise even when we have the greatest of intentions, and our written and spoken messages are misconstrued. These sorts of obstacles can be categorised as:

- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
- Organisational

2.6 INTRAPERSONAL BARRIERS

Because of variances in views, experiences, education, culture, and personality, each individual is unique. As our thinking differs, we perceive the same information in various ways. These distinctions are due to inherent or intrapersonal obstacles. Let us explore all the common causes that lead to these intrapersonal barriers.

- Wrong assumptions
- Varied perceptions
- Differing background
- Wrong inferences
- Blocked categories
- Categorical thinking

Wrong Assumptions

Many roadblocks stem from erroneous assumptions. For example, a doctor who instructs a patient to take medicine only 'SOS' (i.e. in an emergency) without knowing if the patient knows the phrase 'SOS' is establishing a communication barrier since the doctor has made an incorrect assumption about the patient's knowledge level.Wrong assumptions are frequently established because the sender or receiver lacks sufficient information of the other's history or believes erroneous notions that have been entrenched in his or her head. To strengthen your skills as a communicator, try to put yourself in the shoes of the listener. This exercise will prevent making wrong assumptions about the receiver.

Varied Perceptions

We all know the story of the six blind men and their description of an elephant. The elephant was perceived by each man as a fan, a rope, a snake, a

sword, a wall and a tree. None of the blind men were wrong, as the part of the elephant body touched by each man compared well with the various objects they named. This is how different individuals hold different viewpoints about the same situation.

Similarly, individuals in an organisation also perceive the same situation in different ways. It is all a matter of perception. The best way to overcome this barrier is to step back and take a wider, unbiased perspective of the issue.

Differing backgrounds

There are no two people with the same background. Due to differences in education, culture, language, environment, and socioeconomic standing, backgrounds might differ. How we understand a message is heavily influenced by our background.

It is important to understand the audience's background in order to improve communication abilities. This information can accordingly be used to construct the message. Empathy or identification with another person is the solution to this barrier. We must make an effort to understand what the listener can find incomprehensible in our message due to the difference of our background and that of the listener. The language understood by the receiver should be used to avoid ambiguity and reduce multiple meanings.

Wrong inferences

Let us say you have just returned from a business trip and discovered that two of your coworkers are missing.They do not turn up for several days. Since there is a recession on, you draw an inference that they have been promoted and transferred to another department. This is an example of fact-inference confusion. It has happened because you failed to distinguish between what actually exists and what you had assumed to exist.

Because inferences are more dramatic than facts, they might give more opportunities for gossip and rumour to spread. It is critical that inferences be backed by facts when professionals evaluate materials, solve problems, and design processes.

Blocked categories

In general, we only respond favourably to information that aligns with our own beliefs and attitudes. When we hear information that contradicts our personal beliefs, habits, or attitudes, or appears unfavourable to us, we are more likely to respond adversely or even dismiss it. The three common, unpleasant, and negative reactions to unwanted information are rejection, distortion, and avoidance.

Communication and other technologies are advancing so rapidly that many people find it difficult to quickly adapt themselves to these developments. Instead of taking advantage of these developments, which help expedite the communication process, such people tend to resist and criticize them, which is a result of having a closed mind.

Those who are adamant in their beliefs, on the other hand, may have difficulty communicating successfully. One of your classmates, for example, may believe that only science students are capable of thinking; another may believe that young executives are more efficient than senior executives. These individuals are classified as blocked because they may be unable to tolerate any divergence from their point of view.

Categorical thinking

People who believe they know everything about a subject will not accept any more knowledge of this subject. This way of thinking can be a huge roadblock, resulting in a barrier to communication.

The use of terms like **all**, **always**, **everybody**, **everything**, **every time**, and their opposites like **none**, **never**, **nobody**, and **nothing** is a hint to recognising this barrier in ourselves and others.If a message contains too many of these words, then there is a fair chance of the communication getting distorted. To avoid this barrier, substitute these words with phrases like ‘in most situations’ or ‘most likely’. Use terms like 'it appears to me' or 'the evidence shows' to label your viewpoints. If your data is sufficient, it is preferable to confess that you are uninformed of the remaining facts than to be vague.

2.7 INTERPERSONAL BARRIERS

Intrapersonal barriers are caused by an individual's attitudes or habits, whereas interpersonal barriers are caused by the limited communication abilities of either coder, decoder or both. Furthermore, they may arise as a result of a disruption in the communication route or medium. When two people are communicating, the features that define them as individuals might be the source of a communication gap.

In a business environment, we neither attempt to change these traits, nor can we do it, however we can try and understand how differences in individual traits cause communication gaps. The most common causes of interpersonal barriers are:

- Limited vocabulary
- Incompatibility of verbal and non-verbal messages
- Emotional outburst
- Communication selectivity
- Cultural variations
- Poor listening skills
- Noise in the channel

Limited vocabulary

Inadequate vocabulary can be a big communication barrier. We occasionally find ourselves looking for the perfect word or phrase that best expresses what we want to say.If we fumble for words during a speech it will leave a poor

impression on the audience. On the other hand, having a large and broad vocabulary can help us make a good impression on our listeners.

Incompatibility of verbal and non-verbal messages

Non-verbal cues provide a deeper insight into a sender's message. Ignoring or misinterpreting nonverbal cues might lead to the message being entirely misinterpreted. As a result, not only should one strive to read others' nonverbal clues, but one should also be mindful of one's own body language.

Generalisations, based on assumptions about physical appearance or dress, can also lead to severe communication barriers. Physical appearance often serves as one of the most important non-verbal cues.

One can follow certain guidelines to improve the physical appearance to give a strong impression. These can be:

- Dress appropriately for the event
- Keep your clothing tidy and clean
- Choose a suitable hair style
- Wear clean and polished shoes

Emotional outburst

In most cases, a moderate level of emotional involvement intensifies communication. Excessive emotional engagement, on the other hand, might be a communication barrier. Extreme rage, for example, might create an emotionally charged environment in which reasonable debate is difficult.Likewise, prejudice, stereotyping, and boredom all hinder effective communication. Positive emotions such as happiness and excitement also interfere in communication, but to a much lesser extent than negative feelings.

Emotions are an integral part of our being, whether in business or personal encounters. By sharpening self-awareness, intention and empathy, emotions can help in developing an environment that is highly conducive to good communication. Yet, situations do arise where people react negatively. Depending on their nature and the situation, this negative reaction may be classified as hostile or defensive. Both reactions occur when the receiver of the message perceives some kind of threat. Hostility can be considered as a move to counter-attack the threat, whereas defensiveness is resistance to it.

It is important to maintain one's composure in all kinds of communication. Viewing issues from different perspectives helps develop objectivity and rational thinking, which in turn can eliminate many of the causes of hostility or defensiveness.

Communication selectivity

Communication selectivity is a barrier imposed by the recipient in a communication process when s/he pays attention to only a portion of the message.This happens because s/he is interested only in that part of the

message which may be of use to him/her. In this case, the sender is not to blame. The receiver is the one who interrupts the flow of communication.

Take for example, a meeting held by the CEO of a company. S/he has called all her/his senior executives from various divisions i.e.production, marketing, finance and human resource (HR). S/he addresses a variety of subjects during the meeting. However, until s/he has each participant's complete attention, s/he may not be able to get the entire point over. If the production manager and the marketing manager focus solely on their respective divisions, they may not be able to have a comprehensive understanding of the CEO's message. Such a situation creates the gaps between different divisions in turn resulting in less productivity.

Cultural variations

This is one of the most predominant interpersonal factors contributing to communication failure. As businesses are crossing national boundaries to compete on a global scale, the outlook of the global and domestic workforce has changed drastically. European, Asian and American firms have expanded their business worldwide to create international ties through partnerships, collaborations and affiliations. The management and employees of such organisations need to closely observe the laws, customs and business practices of their host countries while dealing with their multinational workforce. To compete successfully in such a business environment, one must overcome the communication inadequacy arising due to different languages and cultures. We will learn cross-cultural communication in more detail in Unit 14.

Poor Listening Skills

Poor listening habits are a frequent communication barrier. It is important to keep in mind that listening and hearing are not the same thing. Hearing is a passive activity, whereas listening involves deliberate attention and correct decoding of the speaker's information. Misunderstandings and disputes can be avoided if individuals pay close attention to the message.The various distractions that hinder listening can be emotional disturbances, indifferences, aggression and wandering attention.

Sometimes an individual is so engrossed in his/her thoughts and worries that s/he is unable to concentrate on listening. If a superior goes on shifting the papers on his/her desk while listening to his/her subordinate, without making eye contact with the latter, s/he pays divided attention to the speaker’s message. This divided attention adversely affects the superior-subordinate relationship, besides distorting the communication.

Noise in the channel

Any undesirable signal that obstructs communication is referred to as noise. It is not restricted to aural disruptions, but may also take the shape of visual, audio-visual, textual, bodily, or psychological manifestations. Each of these kinds of noise transmit additional information that might detract from the message and even upset the receiver.

Technical or physical noise refers to the din (noise) of machines, the blare of music from a stereo system, or other such sounds which make it difficult for the listener to hear. Human noise can be experienced when a late comer arrives at a meeting distracting everybody's attention. Disturbance in mobile and fixed line communication to weak or nil signal strength, poor acoustic of a room, badly typed and edited documents and illegible hand-writing are some more examples of technical noise.

2.8 ORGANISATIONAL BARRIERS

Communication obstacles exist not just between individuals or between two persons, but also inside organisations. Every company, regardless of size, has its own communication strategies and must operate under its own communication environment.

In a large organisation, where the flow of communication is downward, feedback is not guaranteed. Organisations with a flat structure usually tend to have an intricately knit communication network. Irrespective of size, all organisations have communication policies which describe the protocol to be followed. It is the structure and complexity of this protocol that usually causes communication barriers.

A majority of large corporations are discovering that a rigid hierarchical structure restricts communication. This is due to the multiple transfer points in these hierarchical systems' communication flow, which can cause the message to be distorted, delayed, or lost.To avoid these, there should preferably be a sender-receiver contact or the message should be transmitted with minimum transfer stations.

The main organisational barriers are:

- Too many transfer stations
- Fear of superiors
- Negative tendencies
- Use of inappropriate media
- Information overload

Too many transfer stations

The more links there are in a communication chain, the greater are the chances of miscommunication. Imagine, for instance, that your professor asks you to convey a message to X. You, because of some inconvenience or sheer laziness, ask your friend Y to do this job. Now there are four people involved in this communication channel. Let us see how the message gets distorted as a result of the increased number of transfer stations.

Professor: X was supposed to meet me today regarding the submission of an assignment on Business Communication. But I want X to meet me on Friday as I am going out of station tomorrow.

You (to your friend Y): Ask X to meet the professor tomorrow regarding the assignment, as the Professor is going out of station today.

Your friend Y (To X): X, you have to meet the professor today as s/he will not be available tomorrow.

This is an example of how messages get distorted in large organisations with several layers of communication channels. The message gets distorted at each level not only because of poor listening or lack of concentration, but also because of several other reasons. Some employees may filter out parts of the message they consider unimportant. Whatever the reasons for filtering or distorting the message, having too many transfer stations is always an obstacle to effective communication and should be avoided. Transfer stations do serve a purpose, but having too many of them is counter-productive.

Fear of Superiors

Fear or awe of superiors hinders subordinates from speaking openly in strictly organized organisations. Some employees may avoid any conversations with their superiors in order to avoid speaking directly to their employer.At the other extreme, they may present all the information that they have, feeling that they may be censured for leaving out some information which may be vital in the superior's eye. This results in voluminous reports with critical information mingled with irrelevant elements in written communication. Such unfocused messages result in a lot of wasted time.

Negative Tendencies

Many organisations create work groups. While some groups are formed according to the requirements of the task on hand such as completing a particular work project other small groups are also formed for recreational, social or community purposes. These groups may be formal or informal, and generally consist of people with similar values, beliefs, behaviour, attitudes and opinions. Nevertheless, sometimes a conflict between members and non-members of a group results in a communication barrier.

The student members of the sports club of an educational institution may be annoyed with non-student members who create obstacles in allocation of more funds for sports equipment. This type of opposition gives rise to insider-outsider equations and paves the way for negative tendencies in the organisation.

Use of inappropriate media

While choosing the medium for a particular occasion, the advantages, disadvantages and potential barriers to communication must be considered. While deciding the medium, such as phones, emails, computer presentations, teleconferencing and video-conferencing, the following factors should be considered:

- Time
- Type of message
- Cost
- Intended audience

For example, the telephone is not a good medium for delivering sensitive information. Such communications are best delivered in person or by private chat messenger if the receiver is in another office. For information that has to be recorded and retrieved in the future, printed letters are preferred since they are permanent. Effective communication usually requires a combination of mediums, such as an email followed by a phone conversation.

Information Overload

One of the most serious issues confronting businesses today is the loss of efficiency caused by the manual processing of enormous amounts of data. Information overload is the term for this situation. The usual results of information overload are fatigue, disinterest, and boredom. Under these circumstances, further communication is not possible. Important and essential information is frequently mixed in with too many irrelevant data and overlooked by the receiver. As a result, information quality is far more essential than quantity.

To reduce information overload in an organisation, screening of information is a must. Messages should be directed only to those people who are likely to benefit from the information. Major points should be highlighted leaving out all irrelevant details.

2.9 CASE STUDY

Let us now go through a case study which explains the concept of communication failure.

Communication Failure

Mr. and Mrs. S went to Max Apparel to buy a pullover. Mr. S did not read the price tag on the pullover selected by him. At the counter while making the payment he asked for the price. ₹ 950/- was the answer. Meanwhile Mrs. S, who was still shopping, came back and joined her husband. She was glad that he had selected a nice white pullover for himself. She pointed out that the item had a 25% discount. The counter person nodded in agreement. Mr. S was thrilled to hear that. “It means the price of this pullover is ₹ 712/-. That’s fantastic”, said Mr. S.

He decided to buy one more pullover in green.

In no time he came with the second pullover and asked them to be packed. When he was requested the amount for payment, he was astonished to find that he had to pay ₹ 1900/- and not ₹ 1424/-.

Mr. S could hardly reconcile himself to the fact that the counter person had quoted the discounted price which was ₹ 950/-. The original price printed on the price tag was ₹ 1266/-.

Activity 1

a) Identify the three sources of Mr. S's information.

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b) Discuss the main barrier involved in this case.

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c) What should Mr. S have done to avoid the misunderstanding?

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d) Who is to blame for this communication gap? And Why?

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…….

2.10 SUMMARY

In this unit we have learnt the ways to communicate. This can be one way or two ways. We have understood the process of human communication which helps in avoiding the pitfalls which take place at the time of communication. The unit discusses the linear concept of communication which tries to address five basic questions and is a one way process in which the sender sends the message to the receiver without getting feedback. The second model which

was discussed is the Shannon-Weaver Model where it was found that during the process of communication the message can be blocked and therefore feedback was introduced. Later on the unit discusses the two-way process of communication. The unit also discusses the barriers of communication which can be intrapersonal, interpersonal and organisational barriers. The unit ends with a discussion of all the aspects of the process of communication through a case study.

2.11 KEYWORDS

Feedback: It is the response sent from the receiver of the message to the sender of the message.

Intrapersonal Barriers: Includes the aspects of an individual's personality which pose a threat to the communication process.

Interpersonal Barriers: Elements beyond one's own personality which can pose threat to the communication process.

Organisational Barriers: Disturbance in the flow of communication within the employees of an organisation.

2.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Differentiate between the Shannon-Weaver and Two -Way Model of Communication.

2) What are intrapersonal barriers to communication? Discuss.

3) Distinguish between intrapersonal and interpersonal barriers of communication with examples.

4) What are the main organisational barriers to communication? Discuss.

5) Explain the following terms with reference to communication barriers with examples.

   - Emotional outburst
   - Cultural differences
   - 'Know-it-all' attitude

2.13 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

Sharma R.C. & Mohan, K. (2002).*Business Correspondence and Report Writin*g. Tata McGraw Hill.

Chaturvedi, P.D & Chaturvedi, M. (2006).*Business Communication: Concepts, Cases and Applications*. Pearson

Raman, M. & Sharma, S. (2016). *Technical Communication: Principles and Practices*. OUP.

UNIT 3 TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the difference between verbal and non-verbal communication;
- Explain different types of verbal communication;
- Understand the different types of non-verbal communication and their role in our life.

Structure

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Verbal Communication

3.3 Types of Verbal Communication

3.4 Non-Verbal Communication

3.5 Types of Non-verbal Communication

3.6 Summary

3.7 Keywords

3.8 Self-Assessment Questions

3.9 References and Further Readings

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Robert Burton famously said that "a blow with a word strikes deeper than a blow with a sword". Therefore, it is important to choose our words judiciously and cautiously as it determines the success of our communication at personal and professional levels. Our personal and professional worlds move on the wheels of communication. A person with better communication skills achieves more success at personal and professional level as compared to a person who has average or below-average level of these skills. Communication is essential in advising, counselling, guidance, mentoring, giving orders, delegation, giving warnings, preparing advertisement and marketing among others. A major part of our spoken words i.e. oral communication is supplemented by body language, gestures, signs and expressions and these are non-verbal components of communication. Rodney Overton believes that about 55% of the communicator's message is understood non-verbally. He also writes that only 7% of the message is understood through what is said and 38% of the success of the communication depends on the way it is said. Verbal and non-verbal communication plays a pivotal role in general communication (mostly informal communication in general life settings) and professional communication (mostly formal communication in workplaces, schools etc.). In this unit, we will go through the details of various types of communication to understand the difference between them and their importance.

3.2 VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Verbal communication is the sum total of the time spent in speaking, listening and writing in a personal and professional capacity. In other words, we can understand verbal communication as the establishment of communication between people using oral or written words. The message is transferred from the sender to the receiver through an oral or written channel of communication. Verbal communication thus stands for both spoken and written communication. It can be one-way communication where the message flows from the sender to the receiver and nothing goes back to sender from the receiver or it can be a two-way communication where the communication is negotiated between two people i.e. the sender sends the message and the receiver responds. They exchange information, clarify doubts and work together in harmony to achieve a common goal.

3.3 TYPES OF VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Basically verbal communication can be classified into two categories and they are -

- Oral communication
- Written communication

Oral communication is something where we speak with someone through words whereas written communication includes the words which are in a written form. Let us now discuss these types of communication.

Oral Communication

This is the most common and popular mode of communication in our personal and professional life. Oral communication, as already explained, involves establishing communication through spoken words. It can be formal, informal, one way or two-way communication. It can involve a face to face interaction, telephonic conversation or communication through video conferencing. In other words, it involves a speaker (sender of the message) and a listener (or more than one listener who are the receivers of the message). The speaker and the listener may establish a one way or two-way communication depending on the setting.

Oral communication can be of two types viz. formal or informal. Informal oral communication involves persons speaking and listening to everyday occurrences like talking to friends, family members or colleagues on topics not related to business or other formal situations. Informal oral communication is mostly casual in nature and is based on social relationships between people. It is unofficial in nature and normally occurs outside the hierarchy of school, college, and businesses.

On the other hand, formal oral communication does not involve casual exchange of information and is governed by organisational hierarchies and chain of commands. The flow of information which follows is controlled by strict codes bound by time and structure put in place by the management

team. Formal oral communication is practised religiously in certain situations like interviews, oral evaluations/viva voce, lectures, debates, speeches, presentations, group discussions in a business meeting or in a school. It is a talk between the management team and employees or school administration and staff members/students. It can be a situation where the information needs to be conveyed very quickly for example the announcement of the scheduled departure or arrival or an airplane/train/bus etc. Formal oral communication is more reliable since it is communicated in official capacity and in most cases, can be traced back to its source. On the contrary, informal oral communication is not governed by such strict hierarchies and normally is not very reliable since most of it is said in a casual setting. The information moves freely in informal settings as opposed to formal settings where the information moves through predefined channels.

Written Communication

Let us now understand the second type of verbal communication i.e. the written communication. Written communication can be understood as the sending of messages through written words. In this mode of communication, the sender of the message uses written mode to transfer the message. The message is communicated through letters, manuals, reports, emails, handbooks, books, circulars etc. Written communication is a very effective way of communication since it involves documentation that can be preserved or can become a permanent record for future use. It is primarily a formal mode of communication and unlike oral communication it is not very flexible in nature. A written document can be used as evidence in a legal scenario and hence it is a reliable mode of communication in professional settings. The language used in this form of communication is usually formal in nature. We use complete sentences, words and avoid short forms or jargons. Written communication is also very popular in informal settings. In today's world of social media and multimedia messaging, we use written communication in our daily lives as well as in official communication in abundance. Social media messaging, SMS and instant message (IM) has become an integral part of our lives. Formal or informal language is used in such a medium of communication depending on the relationship between the sender and the receiver of the message. It is important to note that regardless of the type of language used; the conversation or exchange of information in written form on these new mediums/platforms of communication can be documented and preserved for future personal, professional, legal and other uses.

Written communication has its own merits and demerits. In its formal sphere, written communication moves very slowly as compared to oral communication. Electronic or paper form of written communication is destined to a waiting period and the receiver cannot access the message spontaneously as in the case of oral communication. At times, it can be unbearably slow, especially in the case of formal communication controlled by bureaucratic chains of command and management hierarchy. It also depends on the literacy of the person. On the other hand, oral communication does not require a person to be literate to transfer the message. Human beings are born with the ability to acquire language and we start speaking much earlier than we learn to write. Written communication is a skill learnt in life

and a person needs to go through many years of training to become competent in this form of communication.

A child learns to speak in a specific language just by imitating the elders around him or her however writing is taught. It is commonly agreed that human beings are born with Language Acquisition Device (LAD) and they acquire language in a social setting. So, it is not necessary for a person to become literate in order to participate in oral communication. It is a natural and faster process. On the other hand, written communication depends on the literacy of a person and it is a slower form of communication. It is crucial to understand that we need to become proficient in using both forms of verbal communication in our personal and professional endeavours.

Activity 1

Make a list of the formal and informal verbal communication mediums you use in your everyday life. Explain which medium of verbal communication is used more frequently and why?

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3.4 NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

All forms of communication do not require the use of words in oral or written form. In this form of communication, the speaker generally does not exchange words; however the communication takes place through non-verbal cues. It is an essential part of the communicative process and various experts have opined that it constitutes more than 50% of the communicative process. Non-verbal communication may be visual or auditory in nature. Symbols, signs, gestures, body language, facial expressions, eye contact, physical appearance may be considered as visual non-verbal cues. A platoon of soldiers coordinating according to the beat of a drum by following a pattern of different lengths and notes in their parade is an example of auditory non-verbal communication. Another example could be a bell in a school which is used in specific ways to govern the timetable of the school.

Non-verbal communication governs a major aspect of our lives. We interact with signs and symbols on a daily basis. These conversations are normally one-way communication. For example, the traffic lights communicate with a very large group of commuters by guiding their movements for a swift flow of the traffic and controlling a probable situation of chaos.

There are a number of symbols which are adequate for one way communication. They indicate important information to us just through a simple picture, like a motorbike or telephone to tell us important information

we need in our day to day lives. Let us now look at the following sign and understand its meaning.

The above sign tells the commuter that a U-turn is prohibited on a particular road. Such non-verbal signs and symbols replace words and sentences thus removing literacy barriers between people and the essential traffic guidelines. Think about a situation where a person from an English speaking country visits a non-English speaking country with an international driving license. These symbols and signs will communicate with that person while s/he is driving a vehicle. There are different words for toilet for men and women however using standard symbols representing specific gender make it easier for the person who wants to use public washrooms/toilets.

Non-verbal communication is a form of universal communication which is not restricted by language boundaries and the same signs and symbols can be used everywhere. These signs and symbols act as a tool to include the illiterate population in all major activities. For example, every political party has a symbol and an illiterate voter identifies the candidate through the symbol of the political party. It would be impossible to select the candidate of one's choice from a large pool of candidates contesting in a particular election. It takes care of two different perspectives. First, it helps the illiterate identify a candidate of their choice and it makes the process faster. Second, a literate voter can just look at the symbols to identify his or her choice of the candidate to vote instead of reading the names which will make the process slow.

Now think of a football or cricket match. These matches are attended by a very large number of people and it would be impossible to communicate with the audience and convey the match proceedings. A cricket umpire makes gestures through his/her hands to inform everyone if the player is out or has scored a boundary. A football referee uses coloured cards, flags and other gestures to communicate with the audience. These gestures and symbols are fixed and universally accepted. The people watching a football match can understand the proceedings of the match through these symbols, gestures, signs regardless of their ethnicity or the language they speak. These are simple one-way communication and do not require the use of language (speech or written). Hence non-verbal communication is important in our life especially when the nature of the communication is one way and is directed for a large audience. In other scenarios where we need language, non-verbal communication complements the verbal communication.

Let us look at the advantages and disadvantages of non-verbal communication in table 1.

Table 1: Advantages and disadvantages of non-verbal communication

S.No	Advantages	Disadvantages
1.	It is very useful for one way communication when a person or a large group of people needs to understand a simple message quickly.	It can only be a one-way communication in most cases.
2.	It is easy to understand and people almost act instinctively on specific signs, symbols etc.	The meaning of the message is fixed and limited.
3.	Literacy of a language is not essential in comprehending nonverbal signs and symbols.	People need to learn the meaning of a particular sign. Traffic signs interpreted incorrectly may result in an accident.
4.	A very large data set can be presented through graphs, charts etc.	Making and interpreting these graphs, charts etc. require professional training. It can be time consuming and expensive. It also requires literacy skills.
5.	Most of these signs and symbols are universal and are not governed by language boundaries.	Installing and maintaining these signs, symbols for mass consumption has its recurring cost and can be a burden on finances. Improper signs, boards, hoardings can either incorrectly guide someone or may divert the attention of the drivers resulting in an accident.
6.	It facilitates the ease of communication.	These signs may be interpreted incorrectly sometimes and may result in miscommunication

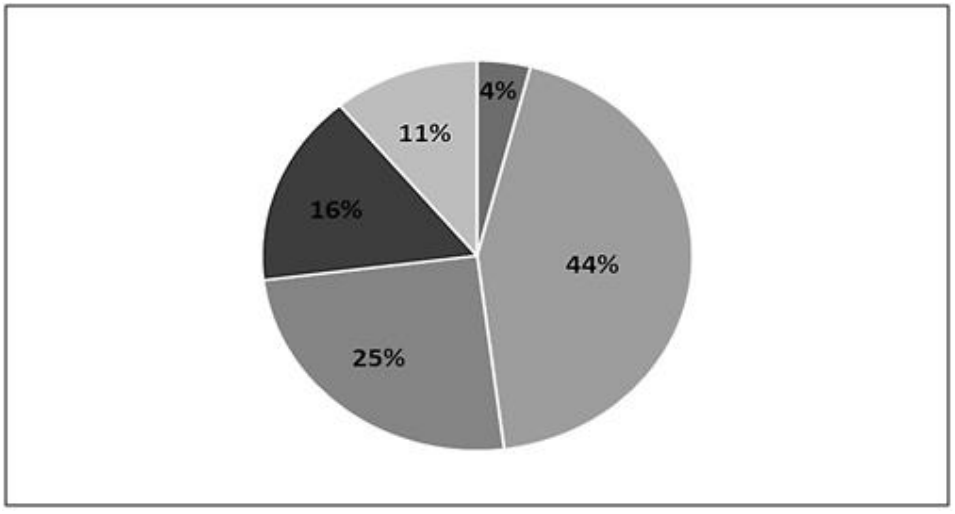

Figure 1: Percentage of Students

Look at figure 1. This is a visual representation of the mode of transport used by students. It is easy to understand and data of a large group can be summarized in a very comprehensive manner. However, it is important to note that this requires some literacy skill by the audience it caters to and in some cases additional training is required to interpret such signs and symbols. Another example is a training course at a driving school. The learners are trained to read the traffic signs before they appear for an exam.

We can comfortably say that non-verbal communication is universal, quick and efficient in nature but in some cases it requires additional training and/or literacy skills for the receiver to comprehend the message.

Activity 2

Look at the following example and write at least three examples of non-verbal communication to a large audience.

Example: Get your kids (0-5 years) vaccinated. Polio round scheduled for 19 and 20 October, 2021.

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3.5 TYPES OF NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

Let us now discuss different types of non-verbal communication. The categorisation of non-verbal forms of communication is very difficult since there are a number of things that come under non-verbal mode of communication however we can broadly categorize it as Kinesics (Body language, facial expression, eye contact), sign language, Proxemics and Chronemics (Time and Space), Paralanguage, meta-communication, Haptics (touch), and silence.

Kinesics

Kinesics can be understood as the study of the body's physical movements for the purpose of communication. In other words, we can understand it as the way our body communicates without words and using various movements of hands, facial expressions, eye contact, etc. For example, nodding of head communicates an acceptance/denial by the receiver. During the process of communication, some movements made by our body are conscious and some are done unconsciously. The conscious movements along with the unconscious movements play a very important role in effectively conveying our message. Let us look at the following parameters to understand Kinesics

in a better way as these parameters play an important role in the business world.

1) **Physical Appearance:** Personal appearance is not really part of the physical movement of the body however it governs our first impression in most cases. It is a prerequisite even before we begin communicating with someone. People form opinions about us just by our physical appearance. Physical appearance includes clothes, hairstyle, accessories like a watch or pen or the kind of perfume we wear. The purpose of clothing and other essential items like a watch or pen has changed in today's world as mediums of expressing ourselves. A well-dressed person with appropriate accessories on him/her is considered cultured and educated as compared to a person who dresses to fulfill essential needs or does not have a neat hairstyle.

2) **Posture:** It can be understood as the way we present ourselves. It includes the way we stand, talk, walk, sit and hold ourselves while we move around during the process of communication. It is a variable component of communication and varies according to the circumstances we face while communicating our messages. It is a very important component since it speaks volumes about our personality. A nervous posture may reflect lack of confidence or a weak command over the subject. It also explains the amount of experience we have as a communicator in a particular discourse. A confident speaker has command and experience on the topic to keep the audience interested and motivated during the process of communication. We should not fidget with our mobile phones, play with a pen or our legs and hands should not shake in order to maintain a confident and positive posture.

3) **Gestures:** The movements we make with our hands, head or face are termed as gestures. Too many or too little gestures may impede the effectiveness of the communication. Nodding our head in negation or acceptance on a viewpoint appropriately supplements the verbal communication but on the other hand, it may make it ineffective if used inappropriately. Too much or too little movement of hands should be avoided. It requires a fair amount of practice and preparation to use the gestures effectively.

4) **Facial Expressions:** Our facial expressions are an integral part of the communicative process since it expresses the intent of the speaker. We can understand the intention of the speaker by looking at the facial expressions and hence it becomes important for the sender of the message to supplement his/her words through appropriate facial expressions. For example, a motivational speaker needs to make sure that the facial expressions are positive and show the energy that s/he wants to convey to the audience. A negative or dull facial expression will contradict a positive and motivational message.

5) **Eye contact:** Eye contact with the audience can change the effect of the message on the receiver. Our eyes communicate in various ways. A good eye contact with the listener/receiver of the message can make the

conversation more powerful. On the other hand,avoiding eye contact may result in a disinterested audience and portray the speaker as weak and not confident. The audience may also have the impression that the speaker does not have a good command on the subject. It is important to establish appropriate eye contact. The speaker should not stare at the listener, instead, try to establish eye contact to affirm that s/he is committed to convey the message to the listener. Maintaining eye contact reaffirms the audience about the keenness, confidence and willingness of the speaker to establish communication with the listener. However, looking down or looking away conveys that the speaker is shy, nervous or disinterested in the process of communication.

Activity 3

Collect pictures (about 10) of people from newspapers, magazines or the internet. These pictures should have different emotions/expressions/gestures and accordingly interpret them.

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Sign Language

Sign language is a highly developed system of non-verbal communication. It uses audio, visual and audio-visual signs and symbols to communicate. We have already discussed that sign language is the most popular mode of non-verbal communication. There are universally accepted symbols and signs and are widely used in the world. However, there are culture specific signs and symbols and can be understood differently by people from different cultures. A thumbs-up is a positive sign and used primarily to show agreement or motivate people in Western society however it is a sign of negation in the Indian subcontinent. Sign language can also be understood as communication through body language, gestures and facial expressions. It is used in place of speech and in some cases it is also used to supplement oral communication. We have fully developed sign language for specially-abled people. They use a different system of signs and symbols to communicate. Look at the following picture for a better understanding of how such specially-abled people use sign language.

Source–ID 134983662© SabelSakya, Dreamstime.com

These are the signs and symbols used by such people to communicate. On the other hand, normal people use universal and cultural symbols to communicate non-verbally with each other. The most popular universal sign is a traffic light and is understood by almost everyone in the world.

We do have cultural signs as well. In India, we use many signs which represent our culture. For example, the symbol of 'OM/Ohm/Aum frequently used in India is known as the sound of the universe. We can see another example. The symbol '**V**' represents different meanings in different parts of the world. Let us have a look at those meanings:

- USA: It represents a symbol of peace.
- Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the UK: The symbol is considered to be a sign of rudeness and defiance.

The sentence "are you an early bird or a night owl?" is a popular question to ask people if they wake up early or stay awake late at night. In this example, an early bird is a sign to wake up early and a night owl is a sign of staying awake late at night. These symbols and signs make our life easy and supplement our communication making it more effective.

Importance of Sign Language

We have already discussed the importance of sign language. Let us now understand it better. There are universal and cultural signs and symbols. We also have a highly developed sign language used by specially-abled people. Think about establishing communication with people who speak a language other than yours. How will you communicate with them? How will you ask for food or water etc.? Sign language plays an important role in such types of communication. We can just use our hands and point towards a specific object and make signs as if we want something to drink in glass or we want something to eat.

Think about a situation where a security agency is conducting a raid and they are searching an area. They do not want to make any noise and hence they

need to use some signs to communicate with each other or else it will jeopardize their search operations and compromise the safety of the security personnel. They will use visual signs to communicate. What do we do when we hear a siren from a police car, firefighter's truck or an ambulance? These are audio signs that inform us that the police, firefighters or medical staff are dealing with an emergency situation. We give way to such vehicles when we see them flashing the lights mounted on their roof and/or hear the siren. These lights and sound together are audio-visual symbols. They communicate with us about an emergency situation. It makes our life easy and helps us work efficiently. The effective use of signs and symbols is very important for successful communication in all walks of life.

Proxemics

Proxemics studies deal with the necessary space/distance two people should maintain between each other during a process of communication. As the name suggests, it helps us understand the proximity i.e. the state of being close to a person according to the relationship. It is the study of the physical space between individuals. We display some sort of relationship with a person when we shake hands or hug them without any exchange of words.

Edward T. Hall in his study of Proxemics divides the space between people during an interaction into four zones depending on the relationship people share with each other. These are as follows:

1) **Intimate:** The Intimate zone has the shortest distance between people; it only extends to 45 cm (1.5 feet). This space is shared by close family members like parents, spouses, and relatives. This space is also shared between very close friends and lovers. A hug, pat on the back, holding hand, sitting in close proximity are some of the examples of communication which falls under this zone of communication.

2) **Personal:** The Personal zone begins at 46 cm and ends at 120 cm (4 feet). According to Hall, this zone is shared between good friends, colleagues, classmates, and some close acquaintances. This space indicates a certain level of familiarity between people. The more familiar the person is, the more s/he will be closer to the 46 cm mark and move away towards the 120 cm mark depending on the level of familiarity. It is very difficult to maintain this space in modern society. Think about a ride in a metro train during office or school hours. Passengers stay in close proximity to each other though they may be complete strangers to each other. It may be disturbing and uncomfortable to some people however it is not possible to avoid such situations completely in modern times.

3) **Social:** This zone of communication is mostly formal and official. It begins at 1.21 meters (4 feet) and ends at 3.60 meters (12 feet). In this zone, we interact with people in official capacity, newly formed school or office groups, new acquaintances or strangers. Interacting with complete strangers to ask for directions or in an interview is an example of communication in this zone.

4) **Public:** As the reading suggests it is related to communication in a public sphere. It starts at 3.61 meters (12 feet) and may end at 7.5 meters (25 feet) or to the range of eyesight and/or hearing. Classroom lectures, seminars, training sessions are some of the examples of formal events in this zone of communication. An address by the President or Prime Minister of a country on Independence Day, Republic Day or on any other occasion can also be an example of communication in this zone of communication. Table 2 defines these zones of communication in Proxemics.

Table 2: Zones of Communication in Proxemics

Zones	Distance	Appropriate people/situations
Zone 1 – Intimate	0 - 18 inches	Parents, children, partners, spouse
Zone 2 – Personal	18 inches – 4 feet	Close friends, relatives
Zone 3 – Social	4 feet – 12 feet	Co-workers, social gatherings, work situations
Zone 4 – Public	12 feet and beyond	Total strangers, actors, important officials

It is very important to understand the proper zone of Proxemics i.e. to maintain proper distance during a process of communication to establish strong personal and social relationships.

Chronemics

Thomas J. Bruneau, a scholar who studied non-verbal communication in detail, was the first to use the term Chronemics to explain the function of time in the communicative process. In other words, we can understand it as the study of the use of time in human interaction. Time is a valuable resource and how we use it in our daily transactions defines our behavioural pattern. If a person is late for an interview or sends late responses to emails then it is perceived that the person cannot use the time effectively and create a negative impression. If a person arrives too early for an interview then it may be perceived as over-eagerness of that person. Time can be Monochromic or Polychromic.

1) **Monochronic Time System**

Edward T. Hall writes that it is part of the popular business culture where time is considered money. In this system, work is divided in small segments of time for effective scheduling, arrangement and management purposes. Hall considers the American viewpoint about time as Monochronic in which Americans view time as a commodity and it should not be wasted or taken lightly as it equals to loss or waste of money.

2) **Polychronic Time System**

This type of time system is defined by multi-tasking. Instead of small segments, time is viewed as a wider unit where many tasks can be done at the

same time. For example, we can answer our phone while typing on our computer or taking notes. Polychronic time-oriented culture is popular in South America, Arab and Asian countries where time is not divided into small segments like monochronic societies where time is measured as per the cultural practices.

Paralanguage

This form of non-verbal communication helps us understand things beyond speech and signs. When we answer a phone call and hear the other person saying hello, we instantly recognize the gender of the speaker and the voice if it is familiar. We can identify the person if we recognize the voice. We can also guess the state of mind of the person just by hearing the word 'hello'. The listener can easily guess if the speaker is distressed or happy.

The pitch of our voice, the tone of our speech can convey a lot of meaning. For example, it will have different effects if a teacher responds in a moderate pitch to an incorrect answer given by the student as compared to a loud response. In case of a moderate response, the student will not feel humiliated/scolded and will try to answer correctly in future however if the teacher shouts at the student then it may be humiliating for the student and s/he may lose motivation to participate in future classes. Let us look at the following to understand paralanguage in a better way.

a) **Speech Volume Variation –** The volume of the speech should be appropriate according to the needs of the audience. It should not be too loud or inaudible.

b) **Rate of Speech –** It refers to the speed at which words are spoken. The speed should not be too fast or too slow. It should be adjusted as per the competency level of the listeners.

c) **Pause (punctuation)** – It is very important to pause or punctuate at the right place or it may change the meaning of the message. You must have noticed that some people pause too many times and use non-fluency sounds like 'Ummm' when they talk. We should not pause too many times and avoid using non-fluency sounds to communicate effectively with our listeners.

d) **Word Stress** – It is important to stress at the right word and right syllable of the word. For example, when we pronounce the word climate the stress will be on the first syllable CLI– and –MATE should be unstressed. Correct word stress is essential for the success of an effective communicative process.

Haptics

We can understand it simply as the language of touch. The way we communicate through touch is one of the most basic forms of communication. An infant communicates with his or her mother or other family members primarily through touch. An adult can also understand each other by this form of communication. Touching hands, kissing, slapping, hugging etc. can come into this category of communication.

Silence

It may be intriguing how silence can be a medium of communication but surprisingly it is one of the most common forms of non-verbal communication. For example, a person singing on a stage suddenly stops and becomes silent. S/he will attract the attention of all the people including those who were not listening to him/her initially. A person accused of a crime can be assumed guilty if s/he remains silent when asked to present a defence. A moment of silence is a sign of respect at a funeral. A teacher can attain the attention of students in a noisy class by using his or her silence effectively. We convey a lot when we are silent. Silence can also be a barrier to communication. If we are silent when we are asked to answer a question or give our opinion then it may impede communication. We need to use our silence judiciously to make our communication more effective.

Meta-communication

This form of communication mostly deals with the interpretation of the message by the receiver. The term was made popular by an English anthropologist and linguist Gregory Bateson. He proposed that the interpretation of the message is governed by all the verbal and non-verbal components of the communicative process along with relation between the speaker and the listener. A speaker may say something but it may mean something very different. For example, an ironic statement like 'the police station got robbed' not only conveys that someone has looted the police but another group of audience will interpret it as the incompetence of the police security. They were not able to defend themselves, how do we expect them to protect the general public? However, such an interpretation has its own limitations. The audience needs to have the competency to understand the irony of the sentence.

Activity 4

Look at the following and classify them as verbal or non-verbal communication.

1) An advertisement on annual sales.
2) A red plus sign on a board.
3) A mobile phone mechanic displays pictures of a mobile phone and a screwdriver on a banner.
4) A teacher writing on a whiteboard.
5) Discussing a project in a meeting.
6) A picture of a skull and two bones on a bottle.

Verbal Communication	Non-verbal communication

3.6 SUMMARY

We have learned that communication is broadly divided in two categories, verbal and non-verbal communication. Both forms of communication are essential in our day to day lives. Oral (verbal) communication is supplemented by non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication is not just limited to signs and symbols but it includes a very large pool of non-verbal behaviour. Our dressing sense, the pitch of our voice, the tone of our speech, gestures, facial expressions, eye contact with the listener, silence, our response time etc. communicates with other people and helps us to establish a successful communication in personal and professional spheres. This unit gives a brief idea about various types of communication and their importance.

3.7 KEYWORDS

Verbal Communication: It is the communication between people using oral or written words.

Non-verbal Communication: Use of Symbols, signs, gestures, body language, facial expressions, eye contact, physical appearance to communicate.

Sign language: It is using signs and symbols to communicate.

Gestures: It is the movement of the head, hand or body parts to express something.

Body Language: non-verbal communication through the use of physical behaviour, expressions, and mannerisms to communicate.

Proxemics: It deals with the necessary space/distance two people should maintain between each other during a process of communication.

Chronemics: It is the study of the use of time in human interaction

3.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) What are the different types of Verbal Communication?
2) What is Non-Verbal Communication?
3) What is the difference between Kinesis and Sign Language?
4) Explain the concept of Proxemics and Chronemics?
5) How is Paralanguage different from Meta-communication?
6) How is silence a medium of communication? Illustrate with examples.

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UNIT 4 FORMS OF COMMUNICATION AT WORKPLACE

Objectives

After studying this unit you will be able to:

- Understand the concept of communication at workplace;
- Understand types of communication at workplace;
- Appreciate the benefits of effective communication at the workplace.

Structure

4.1 Introduction

4.2 Formal Communication

4.3 Informal Communication

4.4 Conflict Resolution at Workplace

4.5 Crisis Communication

4.6 Benefits of Effective Communication at Workplace

4.7 Summary

4.8 Keywords

4.9 Self-Assessment Questions

4.10 References and Further readings

4.1 INTRODUCTION

We have already discussed that effective verbal and non-verbal communication is critical to the success of a person at personal and professional levels. Similarly, it is important for the success and growth of an organisation to have a robust communication channel where the flow of information is fast and accurate.Nowadays, organisations provide preliminary training to communicate effectively at the workplace to their employees at entry-level and organize workshops in which the existing employees at various levels can enhance their communication skills. They offer training courses for soft skills, email writing skills, competency-based interviewing skills etc. The organisational intent behind investing money and resources in such skill enhancement training is to increase the efficiency of their employees while communicating at the workplace. This will lead to faster and accurate communication with reduced probability of delays and minimized transfer of incorrect information at the workplace. Any delay or transfer of incorrect information would result in loss of production time that equals to loss of money for the company.

Large organisations require various departments to work together and need their employees to communicate effectively to achieve their operational goals. The employees in these departments communicate with each other in

order to exchange essential information. They may interact verbally in a face to face meeting or over the phone or they may write emails, letters, memos, etc. The nature of these correspondences is mostly formal but at times they also communicate informally on various occasions. The communication at the workplace can be internal or external. The employee of an organisation interacting with each other at various or the same level is internal communication. The employee of an organisation interacting with people outside their organisation is called external communication. The external communication can be between the employees of an organisation and their clients, prospective customers, service providers, contractors, vendors, sponsors, investors, media, general public, etc. We give or take orders, instruct, guide, coach, counsel, write letters/emails/memos, prepare invoice/account statements, give or participate in a presentation, prepare promotional and branding material, etc. The goal behind all types of communication at work is to get the work done quickly and efficiently. The communication at the workplace follows a proper channel and hierarchy governed by the system of reporting to one's manager. In this unit, we will learn about these formal and informal types of communication at the workplace and their importance for the growth of an individual and organisation.

4.2 FORMAL COMMUNICATION

Formal communication or we can call it as official communication which is governed by specific communication channels, hierarchies and organisational policies. The examples of formal communication are emails, letters, applications, minutes or recordings of a meeting, a video or teleconferencing for business purposes etc. The use of language, tone, pitch, and style of writing and speaking should display professionalism and should be accurate for effective communication. The etiquettes of communication at the workplace are normally predefined and it requires deliberate efforts from the employees during the process of communication. The employees are bound to follow the procedures without which the work in progress may face an impediment and may experience a delay resulting in loss. If the employees do not follow proper language etiquettes and predefined channels or processes then they may not be able to leave a good impression of their work ethics which will eventually result in slowing down their growth cycle. Formal communication at the workplace has its own pros and cons. Let us have a look at some of those.

- Formal communication is a reliable form of communication. It normally has a paper trail and can be traced back to its source. It is more reliable since it can be documented for future references and therefore has legal validity.
- Formal communication needs to follow a strict hierarchy or chain of commands that makes it move slowly. Employees are expected to not skip the hierarchies and send any request to senior management through proper channels. The movement of information through various desks

makes it slow. It is time-consuming and sometimes ends up costing time and/or money to the concerned people.

- The flow of information is restricted and monitored. It prevents unnecessary gaps in the communication but it slows down the process.
- Formal communication through proper channels is a secure form of communication. The access to information is only limited to the parties involved in the transaction. It is not accessible to everyone in the organisation or outside the organisation since it is not available in public domain unless required. For example, an email sent by an employee to his or her immediate manager is only accessible by the two of them. On the other hand, an email consisting of general human resource policies sent by the human resource manager to all the employees can be accessed by the employees of that.

Formal communication is broadly divided into different categories based on the organisational hierarchies and predefined channels. They are vertical (downwards or upwards), horizontal or lateral, and diagonal or crosswise communication as shown in figure 1.

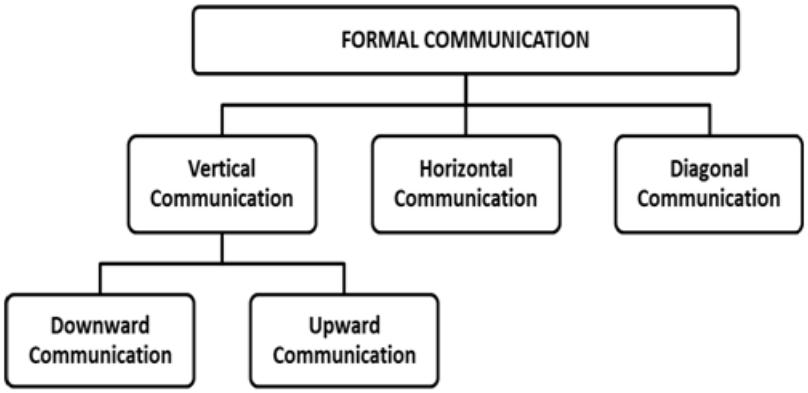

Figure 1: Types of Formal Communication based on hierarchies

Let us now discuss these types one by one.

Vertical Communication

The information in vertical communication is transferred between employees at different levels. It can move from top to bottom or from bottom to top following a structural hierarchy, as represented in figure 2. Vertical communication can be further classified as follows for a better understanding.

1) Downward Communication

This is the most common form of formal communication at a workplace. The information flows from higher managerial levels to lower levels. It follows a chain of commands from a superior level to a subordinate level. They are mostly job instructions, policy documents, official announcements, production reports, procedure manuals or any other information essential for functioning of the business processes conveyed to the employees through email, letters, brochures, pamphlets, etc.

2) Upward Communication

In this form of formal communication at the workplace, the flow of information is from bottom to top. It follows a chain of hierarchy from subordinate levels to superior levels. It normally consists of requests, work reports, complaints from base level employees to managerial and/or above levels. This type of communication is essential to keep the management informed about the viewpoints of employees, the state of morale at junior levels, to receive the reactions of employees on various policies and procedures etc. This form of communication takes place in group meetings, reporting to supervisors, filing complaint or suggestion forms and dropping in the designated boxes or through email requesting to redress a grievance, etc.

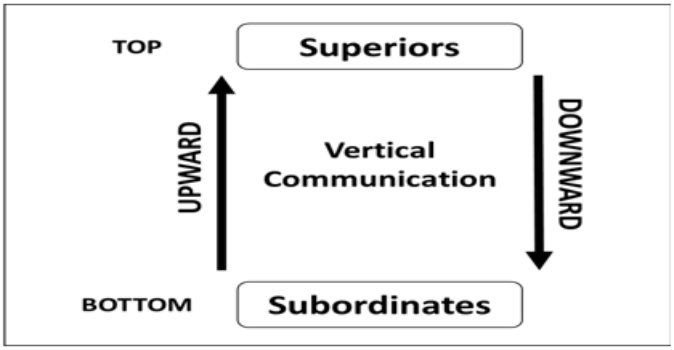

Figure 2: Vertical communication

Let us learn some of the differences between upward and downward communication. This is represented in table 1

Table 1: Difference between downward and upward communication

Downward Communication	Upward Communication
It is a process of communication from a superior level to a subordinate level.	It is a process of communication from a subordinate level to a superior level.
It is authoritarian in nature. The employee at the superior or management levels needs to exert authority while giving instructions for daily business purposes.	It is democratic in nature. Employees at the subordinate levels do not need to exert any authority while sending work reports, making requests or giving feedback.
The frequency of downward communication is high because it involves important daily business instructions, orders, advice etc.	The frequency of this type of communication is very low. It only occurs when there is a need to communicate with the superior level.
The purpose of this form of communication is to keep the subordinate informed with the necessary information.	The purpose of this form of communication is to give feedback or make requests to the management.
Initiatives are taken by higher management to make the communication.	Employees at subordinate levels can only take initiatives to establish relationships.

Let us discuss the advantages and disadvantages of vertical communication as given in table 2.

Table 2: Advantages and Disadvantages of Vertical Communication

	Advantages	Disadvantages
1)	It is mostly documented and commands a certain level of authority.	It is a slow moving communication and generally involves multiple parties in one transaction.
2)	It is binding on the sender and receiver since it normally has a paper trail.	The true intention of the sender or receiver can be hidden under the official message it carries.
3)	It has legal validity.	It is less flexible and any change or corrections requires official approval.
4)	Vertical communication is considered official and authentic in nature.	It involves time and money to train people to communicate effectively using appropriate verbal and non-verbal language.

Horizontal or Lateral Communication

This form of communication takes place between two or more employees at the same level. They may be working in different or the same department.

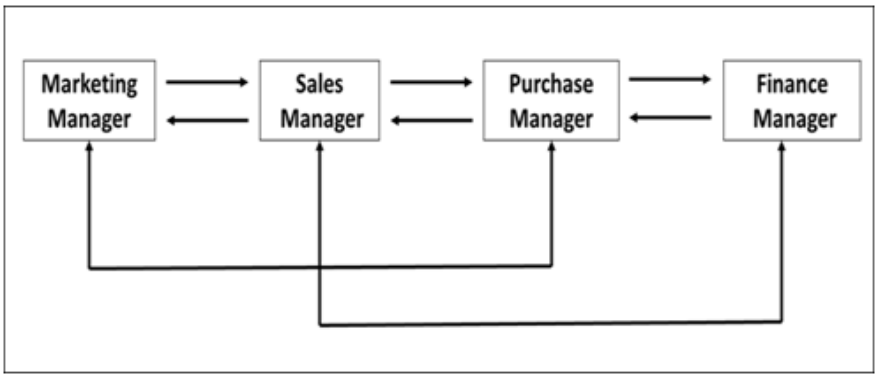

Figure 3: Horizontal Communication

For example, a sales executive communicating with another sales executive is horizontal communication. A sales manager communicating with another employee at similar managerial level like sales manager, production manager, finance manager etc. will be considered under this form of communication. This form of communication is a little flexible since it is happening between employees at the same levels and hence the response time is low as compared to vertical communication. The flow of communication in this type of interaction is horizontal and it facilitates the coordination between different teams of the same department or different departments. In other words, we can understand horizontal communication as interaction between employees working at similar or same levels in an organisation as shown in figure 3.

Look at the following emails and identify the formal and informal email. Discuss why they are formal or informal in nature.

Email 1 **Email 2**

To		To	
From		From	
Subject		Subject	
Dear Sir/Madam, I am writing this email in response to a job advertisement posted on your website. I meet the essential eligibility criteria and have the desired experience. Please find my CV in the attachment. Kind Regards,		Hi, What's up? It has been a long day. I had so much work. Phew! Hope your day was better. I Hope to have a respite tomorrow. Let's catch up at our regular place. Ping me back Thanks… Have a good day ……Bye bye	

Gang Plank

Henry Fayol gave the concept of Gang Plank in communication at the workplace. It is another type of horizontal or lateral communication. In modern horizontal communication, the employees working at the same levels, in the same or different departments, regularly contact each other for business purposes. There is no need for formal authorization for such communication. For example, all the managers from various departments in an organisation report to the vice president. If a sales manager wants to communicate to his/her counterpart in the purchase department then s/he is not required to contact the purchase manager through the vice president. Gang Plank in communication at the workplace operates in a similar fashion. Let us look at the following picture to understand the theory by Henry Fayol.

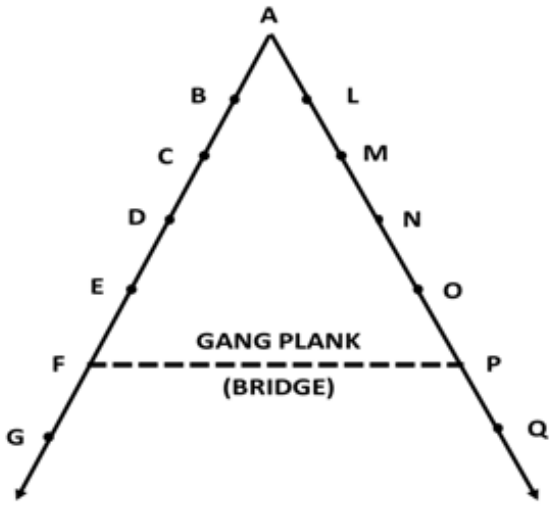

Figure 4: Gang Plank by Henry Fayol

There is a chain of authority and Fayol calls this line of authority as the Scalar Chain. According to Fayol, this chain of authority links employees at

various levels with their immediate managers. He believes that every subordinate member of an organisation should know his or her superior for effective communication. And this chain of command (scalar chain) should always follow the defined hierarchies. However, this chain of command can be broken in urgent situation scenarios but it is important to keep the immediate supervisors of both the employees to be informed about this bypassing of command. Let us look at figure 4. If F wants to communicate to P then the message must pass through all the levels of hierarchies in the organisation. In a normal scenario, the message must travel from F to A and from A to P and all the way back to F. It will result in a slow and tiring process of going through all the channels. But, in an urgent situation, F can send a message directly to P making an 'FP' Gang Plank. It is important for both of them to keep their immediate supervisors informed.

This form of horizontal communication is not very popular in the modern business world. The employees at the same level are not necessarily bound to keep their immediate supervisors informed about their correspondences unless it is absolutely necessary.

In table 3, we will discuss the pros and cons of the horizontal or lateral communication

Table 3: Advantages and Disadvantages Horizontal or Lateral Communication

	Advantages	Disadvantages
1)	It facilitates coordination between employees of the same or different departments of an organisation. They can share their best practices.	The senior management team may remain uninformed of the proceedings in these departments.
2)	It involves less complexity as compared to vertical communication. The senders and receivers of the message enjoy a certain level of flexibility.	The flexibility in this form of communication may facilitate too much discussion between the employees at the same levels. This may result in confusion and delay in completing assigned tasks
3)	It can expedite communication and save time.	Frequent communication between employees at the same level may facilitate too many informal discourses that may affect the formal policies and procedures at times.

Diagonal or Crosswise Communication

This form of formal communication at the workplace crosses the departmental and hierarchical boundaries. They take place between people across departments and levels of an organisational structure. The people communicating in this form of communication are neither from the same levels nor do they belong to the same department. It refers to communication between managers and workers located in different departments. For

example, a sales executive at the base level of organisational structure can communicate with a manager in the finance department in this form of communication. These employees are from different levels and they are located in other divisions as shown in figure 5. This form of communication, along with vertical and horizontal communication has become an integral part of modern organisations because sometimes it is important for employees to transcend their level and departmental hierarchies to function effectively. Think of a situation where an employee in sales discovers a critical error performed by the marketing team and instead of writing an email to his or her immediate manager directly informs the manager of the marketing team. It will help rectify the error quickly since the message will not get stuck with the chain of organisational commands.

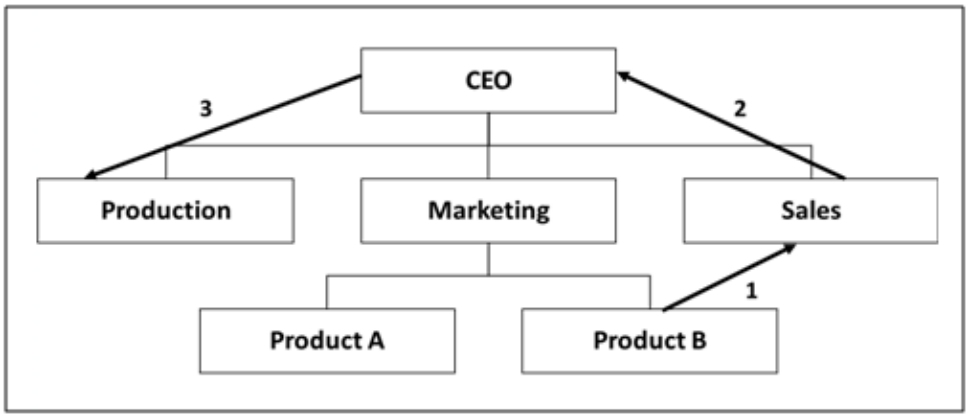

Figure 5: Diagonal Communication

Let us discuss the advantages and disadvantages of diagonal communication as given in table 4.

Table 4: Advantages and Disadvantages of Diagonal Communication

	Advantages	Disadvantages
1)	It is the most direct form of formal communication at the workplace.	It affects the chain of commands and breaks the established hierarchical structure in an organisation.
2)	It is one of the fastest and efficient modes of communication at the workplace.	It can bypass the authority of the immediate supervisor who may not have any idea about the actions of his or her subordinate and may be taken by complete surprise if such interactions create any confusion or crisis.
3)	It can help deal with critical situations in the most efficient way.	It can transfer conflicting information if conveyed verbally which may be difficult to verify and hence can create confusion.

4.3 INFORMAL COMMUNICATION

The interaction between employees of an organisation in performing their duties is mostly formal in nature, but it is not sufficient because human beings need to interact with each other without the boundaries and chain of

commands of formal communication to develop interpersonal relationships. Thus, we establish interaction with other members at our workplace beyond our professional duties. We develop casual friendly relationships with our colleagues and communicate on topics outside work. It is an important aspect of our professional life that gives us respite from the boundaries of predefined chains of commands and channels which defines our life at the workplace. This form of communication is natural and hence people talk about various topics outside work. People discuss sports, movies, politics, future plans, etc. more freely. This type of communication is mostly oral. It moves faster between the people as compared to formal communication. Due to its inherent nature, it does not leave any paper trail and the information cannot be validated for its authenticity.

Informal communication often begins between employees through social interactions. In many cases, such type of communication at the workplace is considered effective as it helps in team building activities and people can come together to work as one unit. Employees can also help in motivating each other by extending help with work-related issues. Informal communication can help build a strong interpersonal relationship between employees who can work together more efficiently as one team towards achieving a common goal. It is important to note that it can lead to the spreading of incorrect information and gossip because the flow of information is not controlled and may lead to loss of production time.

These gossips can popularize a rumour which may not be in the interest of the business. It is difficult to contain them in the initial stage because they travel quickly. Informal communication comes with its own share of advantages and disadvantages as given in table 5.

Table 5: Advantages and Disadvantages of Informal Communication

Advantages		Disadvantages
1)	This is a more flexible form of communication because the channel is multidirectional.	It can cause misunderstanding and spread rumours.
2)	Informal mode of communication at the workplace travels faster as compared to formal communication.	It is difficult to control the flow of information and it can popularize inaccurate data, distort facts, etc.
3)	It can provide feedback about the behaviour of managers to the senior management. A bad or good manager is always at the centre of such informal talks and the information reaches the senior management.	These informal communications are orally transferred among people. It does not leave a paper trail. It is impossible to fix the responsibility of such communication at the workplace.
4)	It is a very powerful tool of communication and can impact formal organisational structure.	It can result in the leakage of confidential information. This can affect the functioning of the business process and may result in financial losses.

5)	It is an inexpensive way of communication. The management team can use this channel to spread positive information quickly to a large amount of information. They can be positive rumours about prospective growth of the company, a future deal, or high increment.	A person with malafide intentions can spread information that may damage the company's reputation that may result in losses.
6)	A competent management can use such informal communication for participatory decision making where the employees can unofficially give their honest feedback about company policies, procedures and suggestions for improvement.	It is difficult to assess the authenticity and validity of these suggestions because a lot of them can be based on perceptions and word of mouth.
7)	It is non-authoritative and hence democratic in nature.	It may become a problem if too many unofficial versions of an official policy become popular.
8)	It can supplement the formal channels of communication at the workplace.	It can destabilize the formal channel of communication at the workplace. The spread of unchecked rumours can become too powerful and difficult to contain at times.

Types of informal Communication

Informal communications at the workplace are mostly harmless gossip. The subject of these interactions at the workplace may include information about sports, movies, entertainment, a person switching jobs, an employee getting married or divorced, etc. This type of communication is popularly classified with the term Grapevine. It is an essential characteristic of workplace communication in all the organisations. Information flows in all directions through Grapevine. It is governed by personal relationships and social norms instead of formally recognized rules or procedures. This type of communication can be vertical, horizontal or diagonal. Prof. Keith Davis (1979) studied this form of communication and opined that "the grapevine is a natural part of a company's total communication system...it is a significant force within the work group, helping to build teamwork, motivate people, and create a corporate identity". He classified it into the following categories as shown in figure 6.

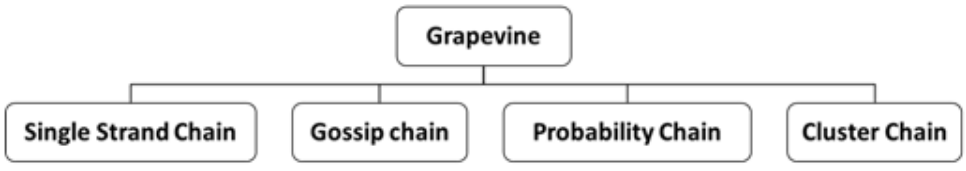

Figure 6: Types of Informal or Grapevine Communication

Single Strand Chain

It involves the transfer of information from one member of a line or group to another. For example, member A transfers some information to member B. Then, member B transfers that information to member C who transfers the same information to member D and the chain moves in a similar fashion as shown in figure 7.

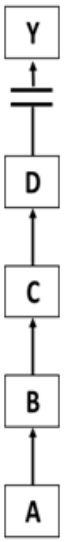

Figure 7: Single Strand Chain

In a single strand chain grapevine, the information moves from one person to another in a linear manner.

Gossip Chain

This type of informal communication can be understood as one seeking and transferring information to all the other members of a group. This one person is the key point in the spread of information. S/he stays at the centre of information exchange. For example, member A can transfer information to member B, member C, member D and so on. Look at the figure 8 to understand it in a better way.

The exchange of information in this type of informal communication depends on person A at the centre. S/he actively seeks and transfers information to other members actively. The other members do not pass information to each other directly.

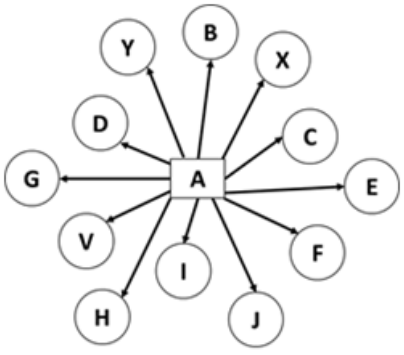

Figure 8: Gossip Chain

Probability Chain

In this type of grapevine communication, the information is transferred from one person to another randomly. They do not choose a participant. The information does not move in a sequence or pattern. Here, member A can transfer information to member B or D or I and so on. Then those members can transfer the same information in a similar fashion. Let us look at figure 9 and try to understand how it works.

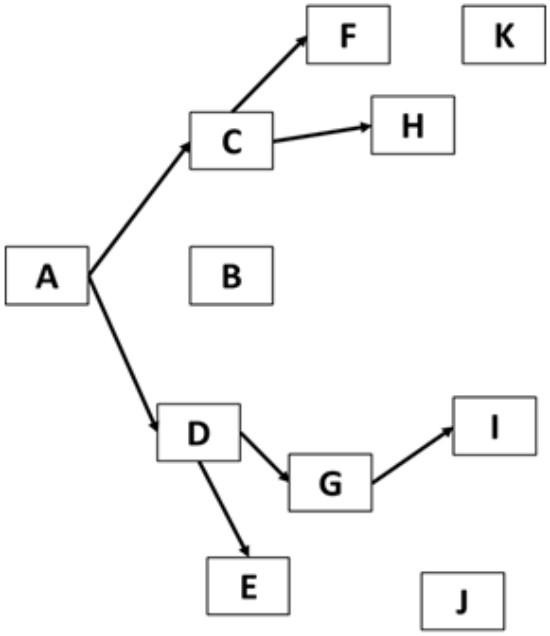

Figure 9: Probability Chain

You can notice in figure 9 that the flow of information is randomly moving between the participants. Unlike Single Strand Chain or Gossip Chain, it does not follow any sequence or chain and is not centred on one member to be transmitted. The information moves more freely and is faster. You may also notice that it does not involve all the members at times and moves randomly on the law of probability.

Cluster Chain

The message is transferred to select members and every member who has the information selects another set of members. The information moves in the form of a cluster of people communicating, transferring the message to new members. For example, person A transfers information to B and C. In this case, person A is the sender of the message and B and C are receivers. Then the new members take up the role of senders and transfer the information to new receivers. Let us look at figure 10 to understand how Cluster Chain Grapevine works.

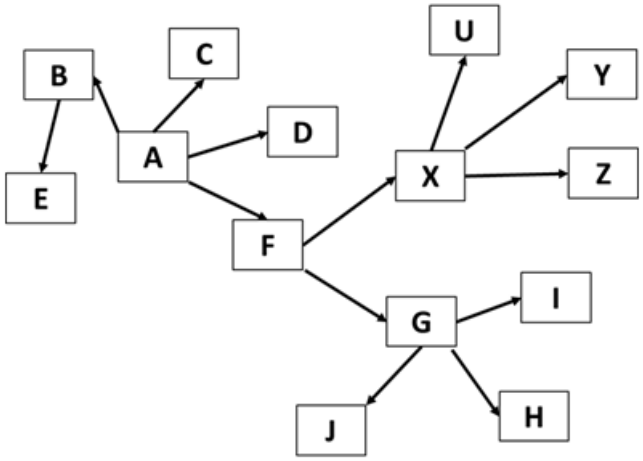

Figure 10: Cluster Chain

Look at figure 10 closely. You would notice that a message transferred by person A is further transferred by the receiver to a new set of receivers. Here, A transfers the information to B, C, D and F. Then F transfers it to G who again transfers it to H, I and J. The receiver is taking up the role of sender every time after receiving the information from the previous sender.

4.4 CONFLICT RESOLUTION AT WORKPLACE

The process of communication at the workplace is not always cordial and about establishing good relationships. There are people from different families and educational backgrounds working together as a team in an organisation. They have different types of personalities, exposures, and experiences of life. And hence, unfortunately, they may have a difference of opinion which may result in a conflict situation.

These conflict situations may escalate and become very large eventually disrupting the smooth functioning of business processes if not addressed at an early stage. They may arise because of personal or professional differences and a manager must handle it professionally and use effective strategies to reach an amicable conflict resolution. They may use the following strategies in the due process of conflict resolution.

a) Active Listening

Active listening is one of the most important steps in becoming a good communicator. In a conflict situation, the mediator (manager or peer) must listen carefully to understand the issue properly. Both parties must be heard completely and patiently. The mediator must be patient and carefully listen to the argument of each side without any interruption. This will lead to two possible benefits. The parties involved in the conflict situation will get a chance to vent out their differences and the mediator may be able to combine the opposing ideas and facilitate a peaceful resolution beneficial for both parties. But, without active listening, one cannot reach a resolution.

b) Set Goals

The mediator is responsible to set the goals of the meeting by motivating all the parties that they are here for resolution. There should be a willingness from all the parties involved to reach a common ground for a successful

resolution of the conflict. They should listen to each other actively and brainstorm about possible common grounds. It is alright to disagree with a colleague's point of view however in a conflict resolution situation the parties involved should acknowledge that they are here to solve a problem together and should work with each other as a team instead of against each other.

c) Stay Professional

The conflict situation at the workplace may arise because of personal differences between two employees at the same or different levels. The problems involving personal differences may heighten the emotional response and intensify the conflict situation. The parties involved in the process of conflict resolution should keep a check on the emotional responses and stay calm at all times. It will help maintain a calm and composed presence. A calm and composed behaviour is a sign of strong professional etiquette. It also helps in dealing with the conflict situation with a clearer mind and hence reaching resolution becomes easier.

d) Stay Neutral

This is one of the most important strategies for effective conflict resolution. A neutral mediator has high acceptance among the parties involved in a conflict situation. The mediator must listen to all the parties involved patiently, summarize the point of difference for all of them to display that s/he is not favouring one party or another. The parties involved in a conflict resolution are more likely to accept the solution proposed by the mediator if all the parties consider him or her as a neutral mediator. On the other hand, if the mediator is perceived as biased then the conflict resolution is more likely to fail.

e) Fact Check

It is very important to fact check during the process of conflict resolution. It is the responsibility of the mediator to verify the facts before reaching a conclusion. It is important to crosscheck all the facts and listen to all the perspectives thoroughly. The mediator should allow every single party involved in the conflict situation to present their side of story in detail to get the relevant facts. It may be very helpful when proposing a solution. A thorough investigation is essential to establish the correct version of the facts and propose a solution which will be acceptable by all the parties. The mediator cannot afford to overlook any of the facts presented during the process of conflict resolution because it may affect the success of the proposed solution

4.5 CRISIS COMMUNICATION

This type of communication at the workplace deals with protecting and defending the employees and company for any unforeseen situation. It deals with the threat which can cause damage to the entire business at organisational and employee levels. At the organisational level, crisis communication is required to deal with situations like a data security breach, product recall, bankruptcy situations, etc. At the employee level, it may deal with fire or accident injuries, sexual harassment etc. The goal of crisis

communication at the workplace is to have a seamless communication network that can effectively deal with the crisis situation effectively and efficiently. For example, you must have participated or heard about fire drills in an organisation. The purpose of these drills is to train employees to act effectively during a fire accident in the company premises.

We have media relations experts working for an organisation. They are experts who are trained to communicate effectively in a situation which involves the media to protect the reputation of the business. Crisis communication is integral for the efficient functioning of an organisation. The stakeholders cannot afford to take a risk and do not have a structure in place to communicate in crisis situations. An organisation must have a robust communication plan and train employees properly in order to have effective crisis communication in place. It will help the organisations to be prepared in case of financial disaster, natural calamities, personal injuries etc.

4.6 BENEFITS OF EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AT WORKPLACE

1) Effective communication at the workplace can help establish strong interpersonal skills among employees. They can deal with any misunderstanding clearly and work together as a team towards a common goal.

2) It helps in developing a healthy work culture where people trust each other. They have faith in the vision, mission and goals of the company.

3) It can promote a positive social environment. People perform better when they develop social connections with their colleagues. They can keep each other motivated.

4) Effective communication helps in building rapport between employees and management. Clear channels of communication can improve employee satisfaction because of the transparency and ease of communication.

5) Communication is necessary to keep the instruction clear and comprehensible. Employees will easily understand their job instructions, policies, procedures. This will again improve employee satisfaction.

6) Effective communication can promote team spirit. The employees will not only work as a team but help each other achieve the goals.

7) It will help to solve conflict situations easily. It is not possible to avoid conflict situations where people come together for common cause. We have already discussed how effective communication can help in conflict resolution in previous sections of this unit.

8) It will promote a safe environment at the workplace. When the company effectively conveys that the organisation is concerned about the safety and security of their employees at the workplace, it is prepared for any kind of medical or natural emergencies then employees feel safe and

secure while discharging their duties. Communicating this information effectively will increase the morale of the employee and they will be motivated to work hard to achieve the common goals.

Activity 2

Look at the following and classify them as formal and informal communication at the workplace.

1) A note in an employee's personal diary.
2) Discussion between employees in the cafeteria.
3) An appraisal discussion in a meeting room.
4) A conflict resolution process through email.
5) An email sent to a colleague using an official email ID regarding weekend plans.
6) A brochure distributed by the HR manager about the incentive policies
7) A discussion among the team members about applying for a leave to attend a colleague's marriage.

Formal Communication at Workplace	Informal Communication at Workplace

4.7 SUMMARY

We have the importance of effective communication at the workplace. Communication at the workplace can be categorized as formal and informal communication. Formal and informal communications play an important role in the growth and success of an organisation and its employees. Formal communications are authoritarian in nature and follow a proper chain of commands. On the other hand, informal communications are democratic in nature and do not follow any established chain or hierarchy of commands. It is important for an organisation to effectively use both channels of formal and informal communication to achieve maximum efficiency. And, it is also important for an organisation to train employees to communicate effectively in discharging their daily duties to achieve its goals.

4.8 KEYWORDS

Formal Communication: It is the transmission of information via an approved and predefined medium of communication for official purposes.

Vertical Communication: It is a form of formal communication where information flows from superior to subordinate and vice versa.

Horizontal Communication: It is a form of formal communication where information is exchanged among different departments or divisions of an organisation.

Diagonal/Crosswise Communication: It is a form of formal communication where information is exchanged among employees at different management levels in different departments or divisions of an organisation.

Grapevine: It is the unofficial flow of communication among coworkers of an organisation. It is also known as informal communication

Conflict Resolution: It is a way of finding solutions for inter-organisational conflicts among employees.

Crisis Communication: it refers to communication to handle major threats faced by an organisation.

4.9 Self-Assessment Questions

1) What is formal communication at the workplace?
2) What is the difference between diagonal communication and Gang Plank?
3) Explain the advantages and disadvantages of skipping the defined hierarchy of communication at the workplace?
4) What is informal communication at the workplace?
5) How can a grapevine be beneficial for a company?
6) What is effective conflict resolution? Explain with examples.
7) What is crisis communication?

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BLOCK 2
ORAL COMMUNICATION AT WORK

BLOCK 2 ORAL COMMUNICATION AT WORK

Block 2 focusses on oral communication and its use at the workplace. The block is divided into four units.

Unit 5 Listening and Reading Skills: In this unit we will discuss the meaning and importance of listening. The unit also discusses the process of listening and tries to identify the barriers in the process of listening. The second part of this unit discusses different aspects of reading and how important it is to build an effective communication process.

Unit 6 Interpersonal Communication: This unit focusses on different aspects of interpersonal communication. The unit has inbuilt case situations which will help you understand the need for effective interpersonal communication. The unit also explains different models of interpersonal communication to make you understand the importance of these models.

Unit 7 Communication in Meetings: In this unit we have tried to discus various concepts related to the use of communication in meetings as meetings are an integral part of any organisation. This unit will explain how meetings can help in effective decision making.

Unit 8 Presentation Skills: This is the last unit of this block where we will learn the need and importance of presentation skills. The objective of this unit is to help you design and give effective presentations.

UNIT 5 LISTENING AND READING SKILLS

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of listening;
- Describe different types of listening;
- Discuss the concept of effective listening;
- Explain the process of listening;
- Understand the barriers of listening;
- Explain the process of reading; and
- Understand the critical reading skills.

Structure

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Meaning and Importance of Listening

5.3 Types of Listening

5.4 Effective Listening

5.5 Characteristics of Good Listener

5.6 Process of Listening

5.7 Barriers to listening

5.8 Ways to overcome barrier

5.9 Critical reading skills

5.10 Expanding vocabulary

5.11 Summary

5.12 Keywords

5.13 Self-assessment Questions

5.14 References and Further readings

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Listening and reading are two important components of any kind of communication. We often come across certain instances where people do not perform their duties well as they are not able to comprehend the instructions given to them. This shows that they have not listened to the instructions attentively. Therefore, it is important to understand the concept of listening and how one can develop effective listening habits. Effective listening is very important for the success of individuals and organisations both. In this unit, we will discuss different aspects of listening and understand the characteristics of a good listener.

Reading is another component of communication. In business organisations, reading is an important aspect that involves reading the annual reports, manuals, policies etc., on a daily basis. Reading skills are important at the workplace in terms of speed and selection. In this unit, along with listening we will discuss different aspects of reading.

5.2 MEANING AND IMPORTANCE OF LISTENING

Listening is a form of oral communication. It involves four distinct components which form the whole concept of listening. These are:

- Hear
- Comprehend
- Retain
- Recall

Listening is a two-way process which involves the exchange of views, ideas and emotions of the two parties involved. There is a difference between listening and hearing. Hearing is a part of listening as mentioned above but is considered to be a physical activity. So when we talk about the components of listening we have to include the comprehension part also. Since listening is a mental activity, comprehension plays an important role. The other two components recall and retain if aligned with the comprehension part, makes listening effective.

Listening skills are important for business communication as it helps organisations in becoming more productive. Since listening is a natural process, it can only be inspired by increasing concentration and being conscious. Listening can be verbal and non-verbal. Verbal involves the speaking aspect and non-verbal listening involves observations. Listening has certain features these are as follows:

Features of good listening

Listening can benefit in many ways. The most important ones are listed below:

1. **Reduces miscommunication**: Proper listening leads to comprehending, retaining and recalling whatever has been said more effectively thereby reducing miscommunication and errors.
2. **Increases confidence:** Proper listening increases the confidence of the speaker as well as the receiver and builds a strong bond between the two.
3. **Increase productivity**: If the listening process is appropriate then a proper communication builds between the superior and the subordinate. This helps in building a good rapport which in turn will result in employees being motivated. This will then increase productivity of the organisation.
4. **Saves time and Cost**: If listening between different levels of the organisation is proper then the chances of distortion in the information is quite less which results in reduction in time loss thereby reducing the cost.

5.3 TYPES OF LISTENING

Many experts have suggested different types of listening. It can vary from individual conversation to body language to group discussions. Here, we will discuss eight types of listening which are commonly used.

These are:

- Biased listening
- Sympathetic listening
- Empathetic/Therapeutic listening
- Critical listening
- International listening
- Appreciative listening
- Selective listening
- Rapport listening

Let us discuss these one by one:

1. **Biased Listening**: As the same suggests this type of listening is based on preconceived notions and expectation. Here the listener wants to hear only what s/he wants to listen. This may be subconscious. This type of listening usually occurs at work places and happens where the personal relationships are stressed.
2. **Sympathetic Listening**: This type of listening shows the caring attitude of the listener. S/he understands what the person is saying. This type of listening occurs amongst close friends or relatives. In this type of listening body language, type signing, nodding etc. plays an important role.
3. **Empathetic/Therapeutic Listening**: This type of listening is similar to sympathetic listening but in this case the listener not only just listens but experiences the feelings of the speaker herself/himself. At times this type of listening can affect the listener deeply. This is also known as therapeutic listening.
4. **Critical Listening**: This type of listening is judgmental in nature. Here the listener gives a critical view of what is being said. This type of listening is good for businesses as it helps the listeners to stick to the point and streamline the things. Using critical listening helps in a) decision-making; b) analysing the situations and c) finding solutions to the problems.
5. **Informational Listening**: As the name suggests this type of listening involves paying attention to the kind information being conveyed by the speaker.

   It is quite similar to critical listening as in this we retain the important points and discard the non-essential points. This type of listening usually

has technical and practical centres. For example, in a meeting about a new product launch or new marketing campaign, the listeners tend to use the combination of critical and informational listening.

6. **Appreciative Listening:** Listening for pleasure is helpful in certain cases. We all love having deep conversations. This type of listening can be listening to music which relaxes you etc. It is usually done on one's own and involves mutual appreciation for whatever is being listened to.

7. **Selective Listening:** This means that we tend to hear only these things/information which we actually want to hear. This is only listening which has negative connotations attached with it. It may result in miscommunication. At times we tend to drift away or get lost while struggling hard to hear only the selective portions.

8. **Rapport Listening**: As the name indicates, this type of listening involves a combination of many other types of listening which have already been discussed. This is usually used when we want to develop a relationship with someone. This type of listening involves showing interest with an inclination to respond appropriately.

We have learnt some styles of listening but there can be many more as the listening skills of each individual is different. These types help us in understanding which type of listening we should use in making the communication effective.

5.4 EFFECTIVE LISTENING

Effective listening skills are important in personal as well as professional lives. Around 70-80 percent of our working hours are spent in communicating in one form or the other. These are certain components of effective listening. These are:

- Concentration / Focus
- Body Language
- Language
- Avoiding Noise

Concentration/Focus: This is the first and foremost component when we talk about effective listening. Focus should be there when we listen to someone. This shows a positive attitude and respect to the speaker. At times we tend to lose contact with the speaker and drift away in our own world while the speaker keeps on speaking. In this case you should refocus and try to understand what the speaker wants to say.

Body Language: An appropriate body language helps to give a positive message to the speaker. This involves active listening. Non-verbal cues make a lot of difference while being in tense or a difficult discussion.

Language: Language or use of appropriate words is very important for being an effective listener. In certain instances it is seen that the speaker uses some

complex words and sentences and it becomes difficult for the listener to understand what the speaker is saying. In this case the speaker may be communicated to make his/her language simple so that it communicates the exact message.

Avoid Noise: At times during meetings or other important discussions our concentration is interrupted by external noise like beeping of phones, someone peeping in a meeting room etc. In this case the phones should be switched off or kept on silent mode and doors closed while an important discussion is on. This helps in making the process of listening more effective.

A checklist should be followed for effective listening. These are:

- Practice Listening
- Reflect on Conversations
- Focus on Conversation

5.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD LISTENER

We have learnt various types of listening and how listening can be made more effective. Now let us learn what are the characteristics of a good listener. There is a relationship between the personality traits of an individual and listening, though much has not been explored on this front. However, we will list a few characteristics of a good listener which can make the process of listening more effective. These are:

- Verbal competence
- Taking notes
- Intelligence
- Motivation
- Hearing ability
- Environmental distractions

Let us discuss these in brief.

Personality Traits: It is not necessary that a good listener possesses a great physique. However, the body language of the listener like making eye contact with the listener does impact listening.

Verbal Competence: This is important to become a good listener. A good vocabulary helps in effective listening and aids in retention.

Taking Notes: While listening, making notes does not affect listening however it will help to carefully synthesize the information at a later stage too.

Intelligence: A good listener should be intelligent enough to comprehend what the speaker is saying.

Motivation: A listener should be interested in the topic which will then motivate him/her to listen to the speaker. If motivation is not there, then there are chances that listening may not be good.

Hearing Ability: A good listener possesses good hearing ability. Hearing does not restrict only sound, it is how much you gather from the conversation.

Environmental Distractions: Good listeners have the ability to adjust to the distracting elements. They do not get deterred from the external distractions.

Now let us learn the difference between a bad listener and a good listener in table 1.

Table 1: Difference between Good and Bad listener

Parameters	Good Listener	Bad Listener
1. Interest area	Seeks opportunity	Shows no interest
2. Content vs. delivery	Focus on content	Focus on delivery
3. Biasness	Low	High
4. Flexibility	High	Low
5. Listening ability	High	Low
6. Attentiveness	High	Low
7. External distraction	Avoids distraction	Distracted easily
8. Mental status	Highly focused	Less focused
9. Reaction	Does not react to emotions	Reacts to emotions
10. Speech vs thoughts	Challenges, summarises mentally	Day-dreamer

A good listener, therefore, is the one who can overcome all the limitations and can focus on the conversation

5.6 PROCESS OF LISTENING

Listening in itself is a whole process and involves different steps. These are six steps involved in the listening process. These are:

- Identification
- Reception
- Comprehension/Understanding
- Evaluation
- Retention
- Respond

Identification: This is the first step in the process of listening, which involves identifying the speech and sound. It is deliberate in nature as an effort has to be made to identify the sound and select the important message.

Reception: This is the second step. The hearing ability plays an important role in receiving the message. Since listening is an active process the meaning from both verbal and non-verbal cues are to be interpreted.

Comprehension/Understanding: In this step the listener tries to determine the meaning of the topic/words being spoken. This is like decoding the message. This occurs when there is a synchronisation between the speaker and the listener.

Evaluation: In this step the listener tries to evaluate the information received both qualitatively and quantitatively. Through this step the listener forms an opinion about the message received.

Retention: This step shows the ability of the listener to retain the message. Here, the listener categorises the information gathered by him/her for the future. Usually the information is stored in the memory for future use.

Respond: The last step is using the information stored at the right time and right place. The listener can respond through verbal or non-verbal cues.

The process of listening is quite crucial than the process of reading as chances of miscommunication and misunderstanding is more here. The retention may be low, leading to forgetfulness which may lead to mistakes. Therefore, developing proper listening skills is important

5.7 BARRIERS TO LISTENING

There are a number of different barriers to listening. Identifying the barriers to listening is important in developing effective listening skills. These are as follow:

1. **Selective listening**

   As discussed in types of listening, this type of listening becomes a barrier.

   We all listen selectively at some time or other. It is a necessary at times to avoid distraction but it can become a barrier if the listener has the following issues while listening selectively –

   a. Preconceived notions about the speaker

   b. Biases about the topic

   Identifying any preconceptions before the review meeting will help reduce this barrier.

2. **Speed of speech vs speed of thought**

   There is a considerable difference between the speed at which people talk and the speed at which they think. The average person speaks at about 125 words per minute, whereas thinking speed is

usually 500 words per minute. We all have a tendency of thinking faster than we can realize. Therefore, there are chances that we overthink about what is being said and reach the conclusion before the speaker finishes his/her speech. This acts as a barrier to effective listening.

3. **Lack of interest**

   This is one of the most common barriers to listening. If the listener is not interested in the topic, then it acts as a hindrance in the listening process.

4. **Beliefs and attitudes**

   We all have some opinions on various issues and hold specific values and traits. Moreover, at times we strongly feel about certain subjects and value specific behaviour. As a result, we may react emotionally if someone challenges our beliefs and attitudes. This reaction can act as a barrier in the listening process.

5. **Reaction to speaker**

   At times listeners tend to react to the speaker rather than listening to what s/he is saying. As a result, the message in the speech gets lost which in turn makes listening less effective.

6. **Repetition of words**

   Over-repetition of words and phrases is distracting. Likewise, the use of unfamiliar (e.g. jargon) words can also be a distraction. Another important point to note is that words can mean different things to different people. Therefore, too fast or too slow speed of speech along with repetition of words can cause confusion in the minds of listeners. Hence, acting as a barrier to listening.

7. **External distractions**

   This can come in different disguises such as background noises (i.e. a telephone ringing or a fire engine racing down the road), physical discomfort (i.e. too warm, too cold, uncomfortable seat), lighting in the room or distracting pictures on the wall. Some distractions are within our control while others are uncontrollable. Therefore, it is important to try and avoid these distractions from becoming barriers.

These are the major barriers to the process of effective listening, however, there can be other barriers as well.

Activity 1

Listen to a news or an educational broadcast either on television or radio. Identify all the points which acted as barriers to the listening process.

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5.8 OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO LISTENING

It is important to understand the ways of overcoming the barriers to listening. The following steps can be considered to reduce barriers to listening:

1. Reduce distractions.
2. Prioritize listening over speaking.
3. Practice reflecting instead of deflecting.
4. Asking questions.
5. Listen carefully before advising.

1. Minimize distractions

To avoid getting distracted, ensure that you are physically facing the speaker and make frequent eye contact with them while they are speaking. Make sure you are seated or standing comfortably. Put the cellphone on silent mode. This motivates the speaker as s/he will get the undivided attention.

2. Listening over Speaking

In communication, self-control is crucial. If you think you're a talkative person, consider practising self-control in communication. Allow time for the other person to talk. One should wait until a colleague or teammate has finished speaking before responding. Finally, pay attention to how the audience reacts while one is speaking. If you realise the audience is distracted, ask them questions to get them to talk more and bring their attention back to the conversation.

3. Practice reflecting instead of deflecting

To create a bond with the speaker, the listener should demonstrate interest ,avoid connecting your own experiences to their predicament. A better strategy is to just listen and respond with comments that are focused on the other person's circumstances. This demonstrates that you're truly interested in their point of view.

Deflecting should be avoided at all costs if you want to listen well. Instead, try reflecting. Reflecting entails paraphrasing what the speaker has said back to them. It also involves asking a follow-up question based on what you've heard is another way to reflect. It assures the speaker that the listener is attentive and is interested in his/her talk.

4. Ask questions

A good listening approach is to ask questions. Focus on asking questions that are intended to extract more information from the speaker and are based on what they have previously said. The finest queries are non-judgmental and originate from anything spoken previously by the speaker.

5. Listen fully before advising

When someone discusses a problem or worries with you, it might be tempting to provide advice, especially if you want to assist them address that difficulty. Wait to provide advice until the speaker clearly requests it. Even if you want to provide advice, consider if the speaker is actually seeking help or simply searching for an outlet to vent. Instead of giving advice, try expressing empathy with phrases like "That sounds difficult," or try pondering.

5.9 READING

We have four main language skills and these are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Reading is a third language skill. It is the process where we look at the text (written symbols) and these are converted into words which are then formed into sentences which gives a meaning. Reading can be loud or silent. There are three components of reading. These are:

- word recognition
- comprehension
- fluency

It is not essential that everytime we read we identify all the words. Sometimes we decipher the meaning without even identifying all the words. For e.g. reading a messy handwriting. In such cases the gist of the text can be understood.

There are cases where we can identify the words but cannot make out the meaning of the same but are able to understand the text. This usually happens when we come across a new word.

Reading is an important receptive skill. All three components of reading i.e. word recognition, comprehension and fluency helps in developing the reading skills. Fluency helps in reading smoothly. For fluent reading, a lot of practice is required. Continuous reading helps in developing fluency.

Importance of Reading

Reading helps us in receiving information and increases learning abilities. Reading helps in

- Learning new things;
- Discover new things;
- Enriches vocabulary;
- Access to different kinds of information across the globe;
- In being empathetic.

Therefore reading is one such skill which if developed helps both individually as well as professionally. In business communication this forms an integral part. Reading reports, policies, organisational documents etc. and interpreting them correctly helps the organisation.

5.10 READING SKILLS

There are two prominent skills required for effecting reading – speed of reading and comprehension. Let us discuss these skills in detail.

A. Reading speed

Speed of reading refers to the amount of text one can read in a single reading session. On the bass of the reading speed, we can create four categories which are as follows -

1. Scanning

Scanning is a reading method used to quickly locate specific information. When scanning, one may have a question in mind and read a section of the text to discover the solution, disregarding irrelevant material.

Scanning is the process of reading quickly in order to identify certain data. Scanning can be used in research to uncover specific information, to examine fact-heavy topics, and to respond to questions that require factual evidence. The purpose of scanning is to find and focus on certain data. Facts may be hidden within lengthy text portions that have little to do with your topic or claim. Scanning is a process that needs focus and can be exhausting. One may need to learn how to not let his/her concentration wander.

2. Skimming

Skimming is the process of reading quickly in order to acquire a basic overview of the subject. Skimming reveals what broad information is contained inside a segment. Use skimming to preview (read before you read), review (read after you read), and determine the core concept from a long selection you don't want to read, or discover source information for a research paper. For example, one can skim through pages during preliminary review of books or reports. Skimming can reveal to readers much about the basic concept and style of the text, as well as its striking resemblance or contrast from other sources, to determine if you should read it at all.

In order to skim through a text, plan to go briskly through the pages if you want to skim. One will not read every word; instead, s/he will focus on typographical signals such as headers, bold text and italic text, indenting, bulleted and numbered lists. One will be on the lookout for essential words and phrases, names of places and people, dates, nouns, and new terms.

3. Careful reading

It is a slow form of reading wherein one can read between 50 to 350 words in a minute. Such a reading skill is essential for proofreading, reviewing, problem solving and memorising.

4. Rapid reading

It involves fast or rapid reading of the text where one can read between 300 to 600 words in a minute. This type of reading skill is essential when one is not supposed to memorise the text or is not burdened by the pressure of reading.

B. Comprehension

Reading comprehension is the capacity to comprehend what you read. Strong reading comprehension often entails a wide range of literacy abilities required to comprehend and discern meanings within a book. Several components of efficient reading comprehension include fluency, the capacity to decipher foreign terminology, and the use of context cues from the reading to identify significant parts of a book. Some important skills to improve reading comprehension are expansion of vocabulary, fluency of language, decoding, drawing inferences and retention. Now, let us discuss these one by one.

1. Fluency

Fluency refers to a combination of elements. First, it assesses your ability to read properly and fluently. Fluency is also concerned with your capacity to swiftly interpret new words while reading. Fluency refers to how it feels to read, and it has a direct influence on your ability to grasp what you read. For instance, if an individual's reading skills improve, s/he will be able to rapidly uncover meaning of what s/he has read which in turn will aid in comprehension of the material.

2. Expanding vocabulary

Knowing the meaning of different words and when to use them is a key component of being an effective reader. Increasing your vocabulary is a simple approach to enhance your reading skills. A vast vocabulary may assist you in selecting the appropriate term or phrase for the circumstances which can allow one to grasp different kinds of text with their context. You can improve your capacity to generate assumptions, create thoughts, and grasp the texts you read if you can swiftly interpret new meanings and find links between new terminology and familiar concepts.

3. Decoding

Decoding is a talent that requires you to identify the words one may have heard before but have never seen them written. It is based on vocabulary knowledge, or the capacity to hear individual sounds in words and relate them to alphabets. Making the link between a alphabet or a set of alphabets and the sounds they produce is an important step in decoding words.

4. Inference

Inference is an important aspect of reading comprehension. When one create inferences, s/he relate information from texts to

his/her own thoughts and beliefs, which helps him/her understand what s/he read. For example, if you read an article on polymers in the rivers, you could conclude that in order to limit the quantity of microplastic, you should recycle. Inferring occurs when we read a text in which the aim and meaning are not explicitly expressed. Furthermore, the capacity to link concepts and draw conclusions might aid with retention.

5. **Retention**

   Reading comprehension is generally concerned with memorising what we read. The retention of knowledge is the foundation of comprehension. One may improve their reading comprehension by practising summarising and recalling what s/he have read.

5.11 EXPANDING VOCABULARY

Vocabulary is one of the essential skills for effective reading. A vast vocabulary may assist a reader in selecting the appropriate term or phrase for the occasion and can easily communicate his/her message.

There are several advantages of strengthening the vocabulary which are listed as follows:

- Clarity in concepts while reading
- Ease in comprehensions
- Better engagement with audience
- Depicts expertise in the field

Therefore, one should try and improve their vocabulary by adopting certain practices. These practices are described as follows:

1. **Discover the origins of words** – It helps in building a strong foundation of vocabulary. This will also help in better memorisation of the word.
2. **Concentrate on practical concepts around the word** – certain words are used in some specific situations. For instance, use of technical jargon in a particular industry. One should focus on incorporating such jargons in their vocabulary, especially if they belong to a particular industry.
3. **Linking of words** – creating a link of a specific word to its synonym can help one remember it easily. Also, creating a chain of such links in a sequence will make one understand and remember the meaning and context of the word as well.
4. **Vocabulary tests** – take quizzes and trivia available on internet or mobile applications to improve vocabulary. It will be an innovative way of revising and learning vocabulary.
5. **Word awareness –** one should be aware of the words s/he may read. One may skip the word s/he may fail to understand while reading. Therefore,

it is a good practice to look in the dictionary for any word which one has encountered for the first time and make a note of the same.

6. **Creating a group of words –** one may not just remember or learn a word but also its synonym or related words.

7. **Contextual meaning –** one should also learn about the different contexts in which a single word can be used.

8. **Read –** the easiest way to expand the vocabulary is to read more. It is a good practice to have fixed reading time daily and focus on use of words along with the context.

Activity 2

Read a book, chapter or a newspaper and make notes of unfamiliar words and technical terms.

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5.12 SUMMARY

This unit covers different aspects of listening and reading along with highlighting their importance in business communication. There are different types of listening such as biased, sympathetic, empathetic, critical, informational, appreciative, selective and rapport listening. Moreover, the unit emphasises on the certain aspects of good listening. Reduction in miscommunication, increment in productivity, increased confidence and reduction in time and efforts are some of them.

Effective listening skills are crucial for business as well as personal communication. Concentration, language skills, body language and avoiding noise are some of the ways in which listening can become more effective. Furthermore, an effective listener needs to have a strong personality and have verbal competence along with the hearing ability. S/he should also have a certain level of intelligence and motivation to listen to the speaker.

Process of listening has five stages namely identification, reception, comprehension, retention and response. However, there are certain barriers to his process such as selective listening, speed of speech, speed of thought, lack of interest, reaction to speaker, beliefs and attitudes and external distractions. In this unit, one can also learn about the ways in which s/he can overcome these barriers.

Reading is also an essential element of communication. Reading is mainly related to verbal communication. It involves not just mere look at the written text but also comprehending the written segment along with its context. A

reader must develop critical reading skills to grasp the written text in its true sense. Critical reading skills can be divided into two sets namely reading speed and reading comprehension which can be classified further.

5.13 KEYWORDS

Listening: It involves hearing what one is saying and understanding its meaning.

Hearing: The capacity to sense sound by detecting vibrations via the ear is referred to as hearing.

Critical Listening: It is the act of comprehending what is being said as well as assessing, judging, and making an opinion about what has been heard.

Reading: The process of looking at a succession of written symbols and deducing meaning from them.

Skimming: It is the process of a quick reading to get the overview of text.

Scanning: It is the process of reading a text to find answers to a given question.

Vocabulary: It is all of the language and words that a person or group of people uses or understands.

5.14 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Discuss the meaning and importance of listening.
2) What are the different types of listening?
3) How do the barriers to listening affect the process of listening?
4) What do you understand by reading? Explain.
5) How can the vocabulary of the reader be improved?

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UNIT 6 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Define interpersonal communication;
- Understand the difference between professional and personal communication;
- Understand various diagnostic models of interpersonal communication;
- Identify strategies for personal excellence in superior-subordinate, coworker, and customer relationships at work.

Structure

6.1 Introduction

6.2 Defining Interpersonal Communication

6.3 Significance of Interpersonal Communication

6.4 Principles of Interpersonal Communication

6.5 Barriers to Interpersonal Communication

6.6 Interpersonal Communication Models

6.7 Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Communication

6.8 Interpersonal Communication Styles

6.9 Interpersonal and Personal Management Skills

6.10 Summary

6.11 Keywords

6.12 Self-Assessment Questions

6.13 References and Further Readings

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal Communication, whether effective or not, is a constant process in the organisation. It is inseparable from and essential to everything that occurs in organisational life. Regardless of the position one occupies, effective interpersonal communication skills are essential for the following reasons:

- It helps to develop professional connections with other co-workers, colleagues, peers, leaders, and clients;
- It enhances the ability to relate with other people;
- It facilitates teamwork and collaboration;
- It results in increased job satisfaction;

6.2 DEFINING INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

The term ‘interpersonal’ refers to ‘between persons’ or ‘involving personal relationship.’ It is a two-way flow and involves the following: (a) information content, (b) feelings related to the content, (c) perceptions of both self and others, and (d) responses to the contexts in which the conversation is happening. It includes verbal and non-verbal forms of communication and can be both synchronous (face-to-face) or asynchronous (emails, chats, messages, etc.). To understand the interpersonal communication process, it is important to understand a few models like the two-person relationship model, the communication in context model, and the strategic model. Unlike the prior one-way model and interaction model, these models highlight a few important aspects which are useful in analyzing how things work.

6.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Human evolution relied heavily on interpersonal contact. According to previous studies, early humans who lived in communities rather than alone were more likely to survive. The findings also suggest that those who have strong interpersonal ties are more likely to transmit these traits down to the next generation.

Interpersonal abilities have a wide range of applications in the real world. They have a measurable effect on mental and physical well-being. People with superior interpersonal communication abilities are less anxious, have better stress management skills, and are happier in their personal and professional connections. Contrary to this, prolonged isolation and lack of interpersonal skills result in damages to the well-being of humans. Other than making relationships and health better, interpersonal communication skills are highly sought after by potential employers. All these examples show how interpersonal communication meets our basic needs as humans for security in our social bonds, health, and careers.

6.4 PRINCIPLES OF INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Before we delve into the process, let us understand the four basic principles of interpersonal communication which are as follows:

1) **Inescapable:** Whether you like it or not, it is impossible to avoid communicating. If not verbally, the humans send much information non-verbally. Therefore, there is no way to escape the communication process.

2) **Irreversible**: When words are spoken, they cannot be taken back. No matter how hard you explain what you meant or apologize, people may end up losing confidence in you. Therefore, communication is irreversible in nature.

3) Complicated: To believe that communication is natural and easy is a myth. The process involves both verbal and non-verbal factors that lend to its interpretation. Owing to its complex nature, interpersonal communication is open to misinterpretation.

4) **Highly contextual:** The communication process does not happen in isolation. It operates in a psychological, environmental, and situational context. Hence it is not in your control. It depends on the who, what, where, and why of that conversation. The end result ultimately depends on how the message is ultimately received.

After understanding principles of interpersonal communication, it becomes important to understand the barriers to interpersonal communication.

6.5 BARRIERS TO INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Barriers to interpersonal communication occur when the sender's message is received differently from how it was intended. Typically, communication breakdowns result from a lack of understanding and a missing attempt at clarification. There are various known and unknown factors that might act as barriers to successful interpersonal communication. Some of them are:

- **Language barriers**

  In any communication process—oral or written, the sender(s) *encodes(s)* ideas, which the receiver(s) *decode(s)* to understand and give feedback accordingly. In this process, language plays a very important role. The communication may fail if the sender and receiver do not have a reasonably comfortable common language as a medium to exchange ideas.

- **Stress**

  Stressful situations can make people choose to remain detached or reserved in nature. This results in isolation and minimum interaction with others. This in turn makes it difficult for others to establish communication with that person.

- **Position**

  A superior who is hostile to subordinates' views and not open to suggestions will end up not receiving information and ideas. This will adversely affect interpersonal relationships.

- **Attitude**

  People with the 'I' viewpoint are normally perceived as self-centred and un-empathetic. This attitude can create a problem in communicating with other people in an organisation. People with such an attitude keep themselves first and thus every communication is centred around them. It is important in the communication process to incorporate the feelings and perception of the sender as well as receiver of the message.

- **Distance**

  People separated by geographical boundaries and spatial distances may find it difficult to communicate. However, with the advent of technology, people can still communicate through social media, chats, emails, etc.

- **Perceptions**

  Rigid perceptual labelling makes it difficult for people to change their preconceived notions. With already made up mind, we refuse to listen and an attempt to achieve effective communication suffers badly. In other words, if one believes in a certain phenomenon then convincing him/her otherwise will be a difficult task. For example, if the manager believes that distribution of sample goods among consumers is futile, then convincing him/her about the need for an effective marketing strategy will have no benefits.

- **Culture**

  People with different cultural backgrounds find it difficult to interact and develop healthy interpersonal relationships. This can be attributed to the different viewpoints inherited by people belonging to different cultures.

- **Technology**

  Face-to-face interaction is still superior to technology-based communication for developing effective interpersonal relationships. As in face-to-face communication, one can get a more clear idea of posture, gesture and expressions of the speaker as well as the reactions of the listener.

Activity 1

Recall any recent event or a situation where your communication with your partner/employee/colleague failed miserably. Unbiased, identify the list of barriers you both experienced which could be the cause of communication failure.

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6.6 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION MODELS

Models are the diagrams that are useful in analyzing the process of communication. These models help one who is trying to understand, diagnose and perhaps repair a communication process. In this section, we will discuss five models that can help us to understand interpersonal communication in a better way. The case situation given in activity 2 highlights the problem in an effective communication process. After studying this section, suggest ways in which Mr. X and Mr. Y can improve their communication effectiveness.

ONE WAY MODEL

This is perhaps the oldest model of communication. It is based on Aristotle's *Rhetoric.* Theories revolving around this framework are termed the *Classical Rhetoric* and built around theories of argumentation as well as persuasion. The model emphasizes the sender's need to consider the right techniques to present the right message to the right audience as shown in figure 1. An example of a one-way communication model would be listening to TV or radio broadcasts where a message is communicated from the sender to receiver in one direction.

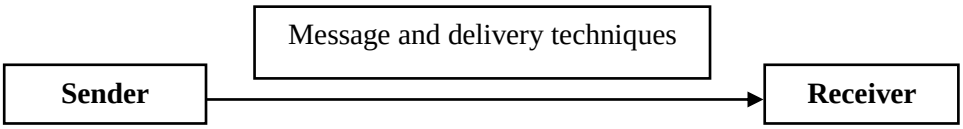

Figure 1: One-Way model of Communication (Fisher, 1981)

Though the model is simple it provides a theory of composition and communication for both oral and written discourse with an emphasis on persuasion. Despite limitations, it serves as a useful diagnostic tool. The major strength of this tool is that it emphasizes the significance of the receiver.

Interaction Model

The model was given by Wilbur Schramm in the year 1997 and builds upon the linear model of communication which we discussed in Unit 2.

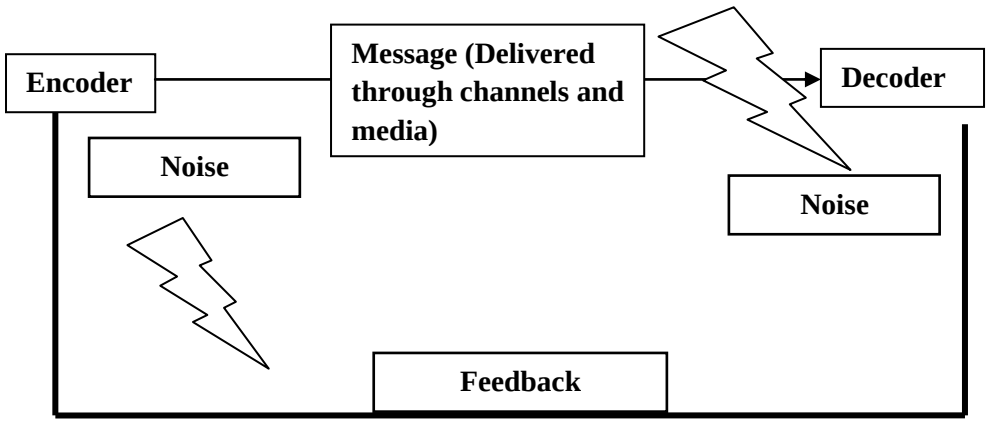

Figure 2: Interaction model of Communication (Schramm, 1997)

Combining the ideas of several communication theorists, the interaction model was an upgradation of the one-way model. The model included four more concepts to the existing model: (1) channel, (2) encoding and decoding, (3) noise, and (4) feedback. Figure 2 represents the Interaction model (Schramm's model) of communication.

The participants take turns being the sender and receiver. They create meaning by sending and receiving messages in both physical and psychological settings. The approach rejects communication as a one-way, linear process and instead adds feedback, making communication more **interactive** and a **two-way process**.

In this model, **the channel** represents the source through which the message is sent. It can be verbal and non-verbal. **Media** represents various tools such as letters, memos, mobile phones, televisions and social media websites.

Feedback includes a return loop by which the sender receives reactions. It answers various questions that occur in the speaker's mind like 'Is my audience happy with my speech? 'Are my customers convinced with the product details I shared with them?', etc. The inclusion of a feedback loop allows a more complex understanding of the roles of participants in a communication encounter. However, sometimes excess feedback may also harm the communication process. In some instances, a sender has to think through, encode and send the information without being distracted by the feedback. Hence, though feedback can be used as an aid to understanding the impact of the communication process, one needs to use other concepts included in the model as well.

As the name suggests, the interaction model of communication is **more interaction-focused**. It does not judge communication as effective or ineffective rather acknowledges that communication is nuanced and complex. It encourages the speaker to use feedback for simulating further questions like 'Why is my boss not replying to my email?', 'Why is my audience not looking interested?' etc. This helps in improving the effectiveness of an overall communication process.

Though the interaction model came up as a major improvement over the one-way communication model, it did not consider a few significant observations which are: (1) communication process does not happen sequentially, i.e. one step at a time as highlighted in the prior communication models, (2) in the process of communication, the participants act both as sender and receiver simultaneously, (3) role of self and others perception, and (4) communication context. The other models were later developed to fill these gaps.

Two- Person Relationship Model

Although the interaction model was a major improvement over a one-way model, it had its own drawbacks. In terms of the communication process the points this model ignored were:

1) Communication process does not happen sequentially, i.e. one step at a time as highlighted in the prior communication models;

2) In the process of communication, the participants act both as sender and receiver simultaneously;

3) It excluded sender's and receiver's perceptions of each other and themselves; and

4) The wider social and organisational settings in which the communication takes place.

According to the two-person relationship model, the communication process is reciprocal: the sender's views of, and behaviour towards the receiver are simultaneously affecting and being affected by the receiver as represented in figure 3.

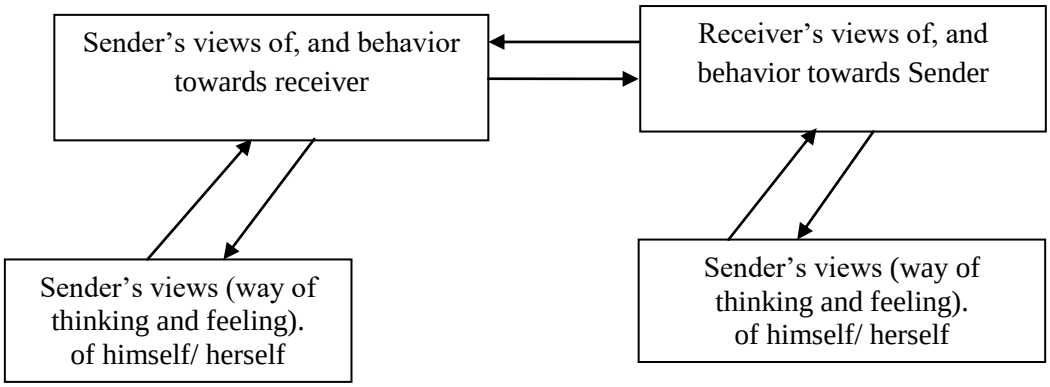
Sender's views of, and behavior towards receiver
Receiver's views of, and behavior towards Sender
Sender's views (way of thinking and feeling). of himself/ herself
Sender's views (way of thinking and feeling). of himself/ herself

Figure 3: Two-person relationship model of communication (Turner & Lombard, 1969)

Using this model as a diagnostic tool, we will be able to understand how the communication process is related to human behaviour. In general, human beings tend to reach cause and effect conclusions. For example, "Mr. A has slowed down on the project work because his project leader was not open to taking his recommendations." This is the most convenient one-way cause and effect explanation. However, in doing this we ignore the possibility of Mr. A as not looking any more inspiring to the project leader. This could be because Mr. A's lagging enthusiasm and output make him assume that his suggestions do not deserve much attention. The two-person relationship model suggests that we must look not only at the explicit behaviour but also at how each perceives the other.

According to this model, people tend to behave in ways that confirm their self-perceptions. The model illustrates the strong influence of self-perception on behaviour. Hence self-perception, the perceptual point of view, and the inter-dependence of two on each other constitute the key ideas in this model.

Activity 2

Case Situation

Read the following case and answer the questions given at the end of the case. Mr. X and Mr. Y were the best of colleagues. They joined the

organisation in the same year and had a similar academic background. They always got along well with each other. They had worked on several projects together and were praised for their excellent team coordination by seniors. So when Mr. X was told that Mr. Y selected a team that will work with him on a new project and had not included him, he felt deceived. He immediately sent a text to Mr. Y: "I can't believe; you didn't include me in the team!"

Mr. Y was in the middle of a meeting when his phone beeped with a new notification. He could not stop himself and looked at the message. More than the words he read Mr. X's anger, frustration, and humiliation. The text had an impact on Mr. Y. He could not concentrate on his meeting and forgot to discuss some very important points. He immediately recalled how Mr. X did not support his idea in the recent meeting and responded, "Even I could not believe that you opposed my idea in front of all the senior executives".

The episode was short but the damage was severe. They lost their year's old relationship. It took Mr. X and Mr. Y months to placate but the things were not the same as before the damage had been done.

a) What barriers of interpersonal communication can you identify in the above-given case that distorted Mr. X's relationship with Mr. Y?

b) Suggest the ways which could have built a better understanding and avoided the conflict.

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Transaction Model of Communication

With the progress in communication studies, scholars started viewing communication as more than a process that is used to carry on conversations and convey meaning. They observed that all communication happens within some kind of context. While the earlier three models emphasized the importance of looking into the individuals and their communication behaviour, the transaction model of communication included the conceptualization of communication, the role of sender and receiver, and the role of context (Barnlund, 1970).

The transaction model of communication describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities within social, relational, and cultural contexts. The model revealed three new factors and these are:

1) **Group characteristics** – The factors that exist in the group or groups to which the communication belongs such as the norms of behaviour a group establishes and expects its members to follow them.

2) **Organisational Structure and Culture**- This includes the organisation's design, policies, rules, hierarchy, traditions, values, etc.

3) **Task characteristics**- This includes the nature of work or the problem about which the communication is taking place.

The model asserts that we do not only communicate to exchange messages but we communicate to develop connections, form intercultural alliances, shape our self-concepts, and engage in discussion with others to form communities as represented in figure 4.

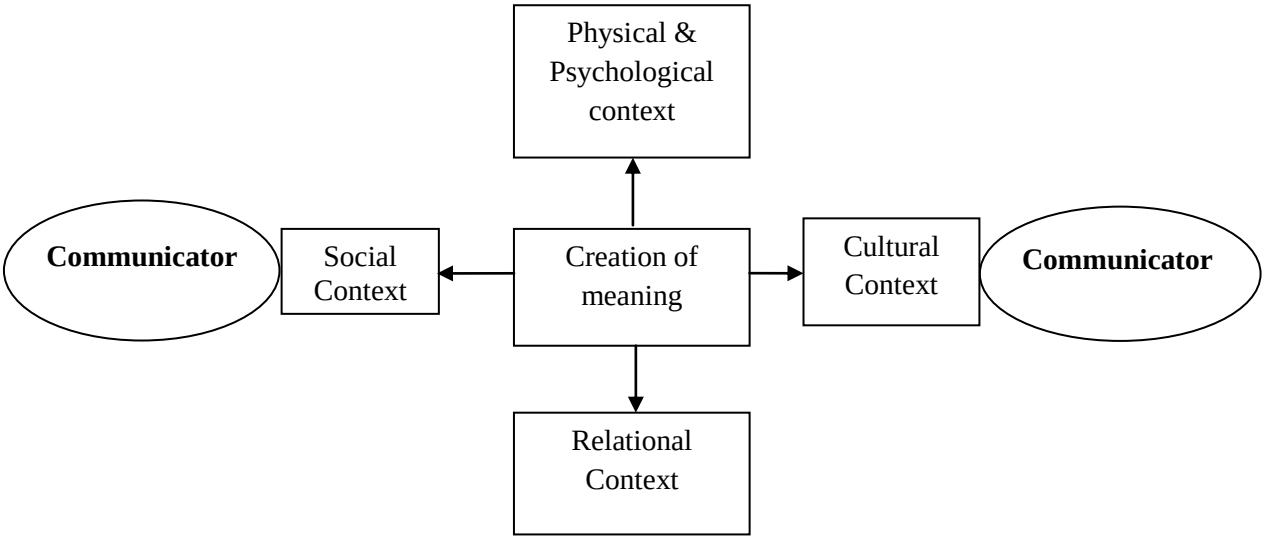

Figure 4: Transaction model of communication

Unlike the interaction model, which assumes that players switch roles as sender and receiver, the transaction model assumes that we are both senders and receivers at the same time.

The transaction model also includes a more complex understanding of context. It prompts us not to simply hunt for an ideal or anoffender in a complex situation. Since the transaction model of communication views communication as a result of the multiple forces and functional interdependence, it discourages us from judging good and bad until we thoroughly understand it. Before shaping our opinions, the model urges us to see communication as having multiple rather than single explanations, to see interdependencies, to seek a relationship between communication and the context in which it occurs.

Unlike the interactive model, which suggests that participants alternate positions as sender and receiver, the transaction model suggests that we are simultaneously senders and receivers.

6.7 EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

Let us now discuss the concept of emotional intelligence and its relationship with interpersonal communication.

Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognise one's own and others' emotions, to differentiate between them, and to accurately categorise them. It aids in determining how to act responsibly in light of this knowledge. People with a high EI score have better mental health, superior job performance, and more effective leadership skills, according to studies. In 1995, Daniel Goleman coined the phrase "emotional intelligence" in his book 'Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ'. According to him, there are five areas of attention - 1) self-awareness, 2) emotion management, 3) self-motivation, 4) understanding emotions in others and 5) relationship management.

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Communication

Research reveals that unhealthy communication patterns affect the growth of emotional intelligence. The people/ families/ groups that discourage conflict, self-expression, and assertiveness may not develop the essential skills of expressiveness and receptiveness - the two significant tools of successful communication. On the contrary, the people/ families/ groups that share a healthy exchange of ideas, discuss with each other before making decisions, have enough open areas to build positive interpersonal communication with others. The following tips might be helpful in maintaining good interpersonal relationships with others:

1) Assess one's assumptions before passing judgments.
2) Do not take refusals personally.
3) Do not typecast people.
4) Learn from the people who are better than you rather than considering them as a threat.
5) Never act based on preconceived notions.

6.8 INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION STYLES

Choosing a communication style is significant in making interpersonal communication impactful. Effective communicator understands that there are a few styles that may work more effectively than others. There are six main styles of interpersonal communication used in business settings. These are:

Dominant style: A dominant style is normally a one-way form of communication. The person is perceived to be low at listening skills. They are not receptive to feedback. In a normal situation, it can alienate employees.

Egalitarian style: In contrast to the dominant style, an egalitarian style is a form of two-way communication that involves sharing information rather than directing behaviour. It is used to encourage others to express their ideas and opinions in order to reach a mutual understanding. In most situations particularly when cooperation is needed it is more effective than the controlling style.

Systematic style: The systematic style of interpersonal communication is used to establish schedules or impose organisation. Managers using this style would be likely to cite company standards or rules. The systematic style is useful for project planning and when working with strict deadlines.

Inspirational style: The dynamic inspirational style is used to motivate people to act. This style can be effective in crisis situations, but it is generally ineffective when the receivers do not have enough knowledge or experience to take the required action.

Passive style: The manager is differential rather than directive and shifts responsibilities to the team members.

The avoidance style: This style lacks communication. Managers using this style try to avoid using their influence and may indicate a disinterest or unwillingness to participate in the discussion.

Activity 3

a) What communication style would you prefer to adopt to the following situation?

- Presenting an idea to your rigid team leader.

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- Addressing the media to clarify on the accidental death of a colleague at the workplace.

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- Giving a presentation to an off-shore client who is impressive and reputed.

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- Warning your subordinate who has not submitted the work on time.

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6.9 INTERPERSONAL AND PERSONAL MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Interpersonal and personal management skills are essential as they are associated with our performance. It involves a set of flexible skills that can be improved through practice. Emotional intelligence plays a key role in helping us "manage behaviour, navigate social complexities, and make personal decisions that achieve positive results". Following are a few ways through which we can improve our interpersonal communications:

- **Self-awareness**- Being aware of the different aspects of self, including traits, behaviour, and feelings.
- **Self-management**- Ability to use your emotional awareness to direct your behaviour positively and productively.
- **Social awareness**- To read the emotions of others and react accordingly.
- **Relationship management**- Manage relationships through an awareness of your emotions as well as the emotions of others.
- **Building communication skills**- Learn to apply the right language and right style.
- **Be empathetic**- Consider the other person's perspective while interacting.
- **Active listening**- Do not be judgmental while conversing.
- **Avoid stereotyping**- Create a welcoming environment free from bias.

6.10 SUMMARY

Healthy interpersonal communication minimizes conflicts and promotes trust and positivity. Within organisations, communication flow, information overload, international operations, cultural diversity, etc. make communication increasingly complicated. In such situations, diagnostic models of interpersonal communication can serve as a useful aid to understanding the problem and resolve them. The constructive way of improving interpersonal communication is to enhance one's EI. There are various strategies of interpersonal communication to adopt keeping relationships, context, and consequences in mind.

6.11 KEYWORDS

Active listening: Listening that demands close attention to a message's literal and emotional meaning.

Communication barriers: Problems that can affect the communication transaction.

Decoding: The act of extracting meaning.

Emotional Intelligence: The ability to understand and manage one's own emotions and understand and respond to the emotions of others to foster strong interpersonal relationships.

Encoding : Act of converting the ideas into codes.

Feedback: The receiver's response to the message.

Noise: Any physical or psychological barrier that distorts the message.

Receiver: The participant in the process of communication who receives information.

Sender: The participant in the process of communication who has an idea and communicates it by encoding.

6.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Are the models we examined in this unit useful? Justify
2) How can one-way model of communication improve interpersonal effectiveness despite having drawbacks?
3) What are the primary elements of the transactional communication model? How does the communication model work?
4) What is interpersonal communication? What are its core competencies?
5) What skills are most important to be effective at the workplace? How can those be improved?

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UNIT 7 COMMUNICATION IN MEETINGS

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand formal meeting procedure;
- Distinguish between various types of meetings;
- Create an agenda and prepare minutes of the meetings;and
- Understand key attributes of effective meetings.

Structure

7.1 Introduction

7.2 Meetings: An overview

7.3 Types of Meetings

7.4 Meeting Preparations

7.5 Minutes of the Meeting

7.6 Features of Productive Meeting

7.7 Input-Process-Output Model

7.8 Managing Conflicts in Meetings

7.9 Meeting Etiquettes

7.10 Effective decision-making in group communication

7.11 Summary

7.12 Keywords

7.13 Self-Assessment Questions

7.14 References and Further Readings

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Meetings are a central form of team communication in organisations. During meetings, leadership is established, goals are shared and purposes defined. Studies show that poorly – run meetings are imprudent and less than 50% of time spent in meetings is considered effective and useful. They are the major roadblocks that restrict many groups from becoming teams. This extensive misuse of people's time and energy can be prevented if we learn how to better design, run, and participate in meetings.

Meetings that are productive produce useful outcomes. They have a high level of participation, positive energy, productive collaboration, and meaningful conversations. Meetings, despite their critiques, are here to stay. Managers must find ways to make meetings more productive in order for them to run smoothly. This unit focuses on communication in meetings. It

discusses the concept and types of meetings and the role of meetings in effective decision making.

7.2 MEETINGS: AN OVERVIEW

A meeting is a group communication in action around a defined agenda, at a set time, for an established duration. Essentially designated as a communicative episode, meetings involve framing agenda, establishing participation criteria, channel selection, and establishing the norms of speaking. They can be effective, ineffective, or a complete waste of time. Meetings can occur face-to-face, but post-COVID business houses and industries are turning to video-conferencing as it saves cost and time of travel. Regardless of how you come together as a team, group, or committee, you will need to define your purpose in advance with an agenda. Irrespective of the types of meetings, certain objectives are common to all meetings. These are:

- Sharing information
- Improving productivity
- Resolving communication gaps
- Addressing the concerns of employees
- Forming policies
- Clearing doubts
- Addressing staff grievances
- Obtaining feedback

All these objectives if met, the meeting can be productive in nature. Meetings are important as they help in collective decision making and provide an opportunity to discuss issues of importance and provide feedback.

7.3 TYPES OF MEETINGS

Let us now discuss some major types of meetings which will help us understand the importance of communication in meetings. Meetings are purpose intensive activities. They can be:

The daily meeting, also known as a **stand-up meeting**, is a gathering of people who work on the same project with a common goal and make decisions informally by general agreement.

The **weekly or monthly meetings**, where members work on different but parallel projects, and where there is a competitive element and a greater likelihood that the chairperson will make the final decision.

The occasional, infrequent, or **special project meetings** are composed of people whose normal jobs do not bring them together and whose work has little or no relationship to the others. They are only united by the project; the meeting exists to promote and motivate the project's success. Despite the fact that actual voting is uncommon, each member effectively has a veto.

The first of these three types of meetings, workforce type, is probably the most common. Surprisingly, it is also the most likely to succeed. Operational imperatives usually ensure that it is brief, and the participants' previous experience of working together ensures that communication is good.

The other two types are entirely different issues. In these meetings, all kinds of human crosscurrents can throw the discussion off track, and mistakes in psychology and technique on the chairperson's part can undermine the meeting's goals. Furthermore, these meetings are likely to bring together the more senior members of the organisation and result in decisions that have a significant impact on the organisation's efficiency, prosperity, and even survival. As a result, the lessons of this article are primarily aimed at these higher-level meetings.

The meetings can also be classified based on the focus area. These can be:

- Status-update meetings
- Decision-making meetings
- Planning meetings
- Collaboration meetings
- Problem-solving meetings
- Brainstorming meetings
- Team-building meetings
- Debrief meetings
- Innovation meetings

Status-update meetings: The focus area of such meetings is **desirability**. Usually, the ‘stand-up meetings’ or weekly/monthly meetings fall under this category.

Decision-making meetings: The focus of such meetings is trying to find out the flaws/defects in the decision-making process. This is important to avoid the ‘spot-light effect where only one part is looked upon and other opportunities are missed.

Planning meetings: As the name suggests these meetings are based on the plan of action i.e. what, when, how, where a particular decision is to be made and implemented. This requires the plan to be known to the participants who will be a part of the implementation process.

Collaboration meetings: The focus of these meetings is trying to achieve a mutual goal. For example. collaborating for a marketing campaign where collaboration is done with all the relevant documents and technological know-how at a place.

Problem-solving meetings: The focus of these meetings is to analyse the cause of the problem and try to resolve the issues. These are convened usually during emergencies when a situation needs a solution.

Brainstorming meetings: Such meetings are informal in nature and have a friendly atmosphere. In such meetings, every participant feels that s/he can contribute even though the idea may not work.

Team building meetings: The focus of these meetings is to create an atmosphere where people come together as a team. The concern for each other and caring attitude is developed. Even in the virtual set-up, the bonding can be developed.

Debrief meetings: The focus of these meetings is on the future of the organisation through information sharing. These are also known as feedback meetings.

Innovation meetings: In the present day scenario, which is complex, dynamic and competitive, such meetings have become all the more important. The focus of such meetings is on innovative ideas to come up with innovative products.

Every meeting has its importance and forms a major part of communication thereby helping the organisations to sustain in the competitive world.

Activity 1

List different types of meetings based on focus area and give one example of each.

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7.4 MEETING PREPARATIONS

The ability to work and communicate effectively in groups is a skill. How you perform in meetings provides a cue to how competent you are and how ready you are to assume responsibility, work in teams, and solve problems. Meetings can have one or more purposes which may be to review progress, assign responsibilities, make decisions, etc. A large part of what makes a meeting successful occurs in the preparation phase. Poor planning and mismanagement may turn meetings into a waste of time. Hence pre-preparation can help participants make the best possible use of everyone's time. Although meetings differ by department or unit, there are seven key accountabilities expected of chairs or team leaders before a meeting takes place. Each is explained in detail below:

1) **Clarity of purpose and aims**

Every meeting is called with a purpose. A clearly stated purpose highlights the key decisions that must be made or actions that must occur at the meeting.

The purpose of a meeting should be stated at the top of the meeting agenda at least two days before the meeting. The purpose should be specific and to the point like:

- Identify priority goals for next year;
- Examine and update product launch criteria;
- Decide how to promote a certain product.

2) **Create an agenda**

Effective meetings are disciplined and to have a disciplined meeting a well-prepared agenda is a must. It is like a roadmap or a blueprint. It helps focus the group's work towards achieving desired outcomes at a specific time. Good agenda items provide focus and structure for a meeting. For a well-drafted agenda, create a committee to help the chair decide the items. This can also be done by sending out a call for agenda items before the meeting. The following is the template for the agenda:

AGENDA TEMPLATE

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">DATE:
TO:
FROM:
SUBJECT:</td></tr>
<tr><td>DATE:</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>START TIME:</td><td colspan="2">END TIME:</td></tr>
<tr><td>LOCATION:</td><td colspan="2"></td></tr>
<tr><td>AGENDA:</td><td>TIME LEADER</td><td>EXPECTED OUTCOME</td></tr>
<tr><td>A</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="3"></td></tr>
<tr><td>B</td></tr>
<tr><td>C</td></tr>
</table>

3) **Schedule the meeting**

Making a list of attendees is only a part of the process while planning a meeting. From the time of approaching attendees for seeking their availability until scheduling a meeting, calendars can fill up quickly.To reduce turn-around time, it is advisable doing some pre-work. It necessitates selecting essential people who must attend. When asking for meeting times, try to be as clear and concise as possible, eliminating any ambiguity or assumptions. Next, it involves either scheduling or notifying them of the meeting's schedule and location.

A meeting site can be chosen once an ideal day and time have been agreed upon. A grid can be prepared. Establish at what time the meeting will begin and end. If the meetings are long, include a short 10-15 minutes break in between.

4) Share Agenda

Distributing the agenda ahead of time helps participants to prepare questions and formulate opinions. There are legal bindings too for posting meeting agendas on time. Every agenda should be accompanied with a clear cover letter stating the objective of the meeting and expected outcomes.

5) Circulate Additional Information

Provide enough information before meeting so that people come with a general familiarity with the issues to be discussed in the meeting. It will be a good idea to share URLs if possible. People have a tendency to ignore long and detailed content. Share information in a succinct outline.

6) Location

Ensure that the room/ location is complementing the kind of environment you prefer for the meeting. Room arrangements can make a big difference in how well a meeting goes or does not go. Most important is that participants can see and hear each other. The seating arrangement should be such that the interaction enhances the flow of information and ideas rather than create communication barriers.

Activity 2

Recall any meeting you have attended in the past. Using the following checklist, assess how well the meeting was conducted:

- Is the meeting held at the right place?
- Does the meeting fulfil a specific purpose?
- Was the location and seating arrangement appropriate?

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7.5 MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Secretary is responsible for preparing the minutes of the meeting (MoM). Minutes are a formal record of what was discussed in the meeting. It has to be transcribed and circulated to each member soon after the meeting ends. Often, the draft of the minutes is circulated to all participants for their inputs before finalizing. Once ratified, minutes serves as a reference for the decision made and form a base for further action.

- Minutes are formal documents hence they should be written in the formal style. The tone used in writing minutes should be neutral. It demands a high level of accuracy, objectivity and concreteness. General opinion, hearsay and informal talks cannot be the part of minutes.

- To maintain an impersonal, neutral tone and maintain objectivity, minutes are written in the past tense and passive voice. Minutes use reporting verbs like *said, stated, illustrated, explained, suggested*, etc.
- To conclude, the minutes of the meeting are important documents and a high degree of seriousness is required while drafting them.

The following is the template for making minutes of the meeting. The template can be modified as per the requirement.

MINUTES TEMPLATE

Name of the organisation:
Nature of the meeting:
Day and Date:
Time and Place:
Name of Chairperson:
Members present:
Agenda of the Meeting:
Resolutions:
Thanks to the Chair:

7.6 FEATURES OF PRODUCTIVE MEETING

The first step to make your organisation productive begins with effective meetings. The key to making the most of the time spent in a meeting is ensuring that all meetings adhere to six core principles:

1) Meeting should have a leader

By leader, we do not mean a boss or a senior person in the organisation. Any person who calls the meeting should generally be the meeting chair or a leader. It is the leader's responsibility to distribute the detailed agenda in advance, assign responsibilities, establish ground rules, moderate discussions, and handle difficult people.

2) Purpose should be well defined

It is important for the chair of the meeting to have a clear idea of what outputs s/he is expecting from the meeting. It is impossible to get a good

outcome if you are yourself not sure about what outcomes you want. It is a good practice if the leader articulates the goal of the meeting in the beginning.

3) **Well-defined Agenda**

Each meeting should have pre-decided agenda items created by the meeting leader and sent out at least 24 hours before the meeting. Each item should have a time for discussion mentioned clearly in the agenda. This helps keep meetings structured and disciplined. Additionally, it also helps wallflowers/ introverts to prepare and participate.

4) **Time Management**

Research states that people hate long meetings. When it comes to scheduling a meeting, it is better to go short than long. This can be done by assigning the time limit to each agenda beforehand. This forces the meeting's participants to stick to the agenda item rather than shifting the discussion in a different direction.

5) **Participants should come prepared**

Each agenda item has a person assigned who is responsible to carry out the discussion. It is important that the person responsible should come prepared. Along with the person who is responsible, all participants need to prepare as well, by reading through the agenda and any pre-reads, along with thinking about any questions they have related to that agenda.

6) Leader should be a Moderator

Meetings are criticized for losing focus. People start checking their mobile phones, emails, etc., start talking with each other or even bring the discussion out of track by talking on irrelevant issues, etc. The meeting leader needs to address these issues as they come up. S/he needs to redirect conversations when they go off-track and ensure people follow the ground rules of the meeting.

Activity 3

Each one of you may have attended meetings at some point of time.Recall any meeting you have attended in the past. Ask yourself how effective that meeting was and how you would grade it on a scale of 1-10.

If you scale it poorly, identify what were the frustrations you experienced with the meeting and if you scale it as an effective meeting, what elements made that meeting effective?

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Features of successful meetings

- Time plays an important role. Start and end the meetings on time.
- Remember all opinions are valid.
- Avoid side conversations.
- Don't encourage anything unrelated to the agenda.
- Avoid commotion.
- Issues discussed should remain in the room i.e. maintaining confidentiality.

7.7 INPUT-PROCESS-OUTPUT (IPO) MODEL

Meetings can be termed as a form of group communication. They are the most effective ways for sharing the information between the members. Input-Process-Output theory starts with members circulating the ideas to achieve desired outcomes. It has the following features:

1) Meeting IPO (Input-Process-Output) is a structured approach to ensure meetings are productive and useful.

2) IPO follows a straightforward process that begins with the desired outcomes, then moves onto the process that will be used to accomplish them, and finally to the inputs for each process step.

3) By making the desired outcomes and process visible, IPO improves meeting engagement and creates clarity, alignment, and results.

How to create an IPO Model?

Each step in the IPO model has its own importance where members communicate with each other to decide the perception of the group. The IPO model is considered to be a cybernetic system which means it is a closed circuit. Figure 1 shows how an IPO model can be created.

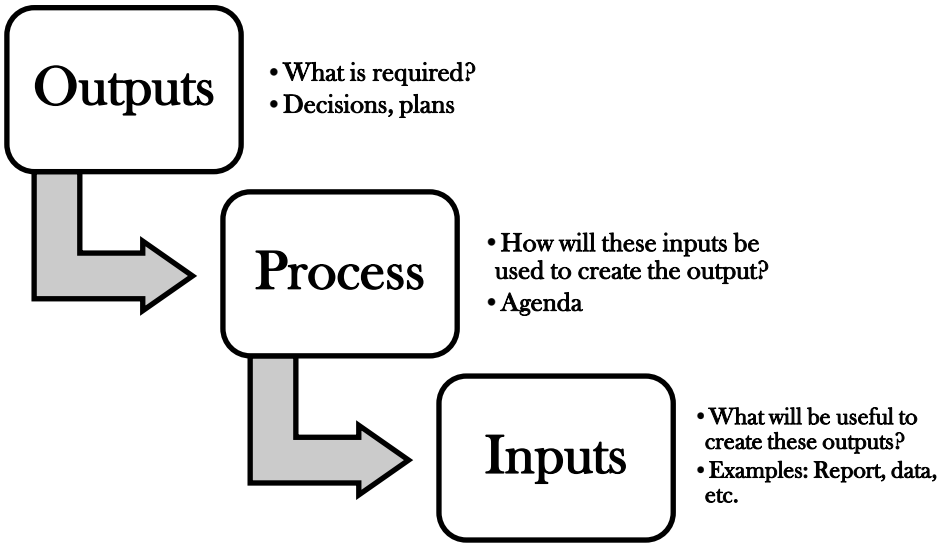
Outputs
• What is required?
• Decisions, plans
Process
• How will these inputs be used to create the output?
• Agenda
Inputs
• What will be useful to create these outputs?
• Examples: Report, data, etc.

Figure 1: Input-Process-Output Model

The IPO model starts with setting goals then brainstorming to develop the inputs to achieve those goals.

Input: This involves sharing of information and brainstorming to achieve the outputs.

Process: This identifies the objectives which are to be achieved and the means to achieve those objectives.

Output: This involves the response for making decisions and how they can be implemented to achieve the outcomes.

Disclaimer: IPO will work only if the team applies it effectively during the meeting.

The model will be effective if the convener can assign the specific roles to the members of a meeting as given in figure 2.

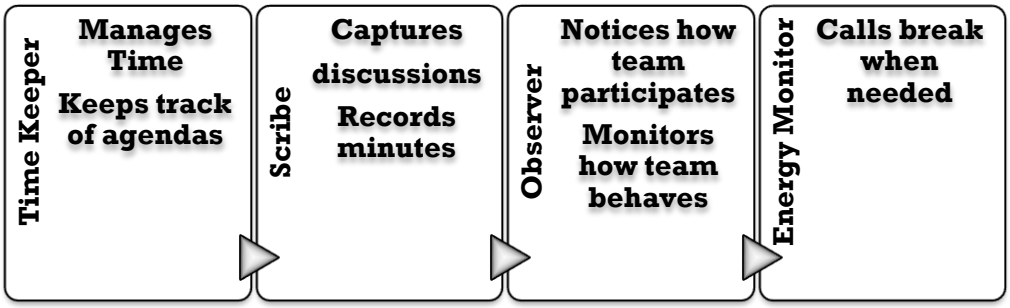

Figure 2: Roles of the members of a meeting

The interesting part of this model is that it starts with setting the goals. i.e. the outputs and then the whole process begins to have the inputs to achieve those outputs thereby making it a loop of activities.

This model is significant as it helps the organisation to achieve the targets effectively.

7.8 MANAGING CONFLICTS IN MEETINGS

Diversity in participating members like qualities, affiliations, and viewpoints in meetings are ideal to produce the best decisions. However, this particular feature sows the seeds of discord. It is an important aspect of problem-solving and making decisions. It's a natural by-product of trying to reach a consensus on a topic or situation. Each participant will have a unique perspective on the problem, as well as diverse values, priorities, and preferences. During the conversation, these differences are brought to light.

Effective decision-making and problem-solving require conflict. You implicitly acknowledge the benefit of diversity, the very same diversity that guarantees conflict. To fully benefit from the collective judgment of all of the group members, they must be willing to differ, pointing out mistakes, and even argue.

Definition of Conflict

A variety of definitions exist for conflict. The best one is given by Hocker and Wilmot:

"*Conflict* is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals".

Positive and Negative Outcomes of Conflict

Conflicts in meetings have both positive and negative outcomes. Some potential benefits of conflict are:

1) It can produce a better understanding of issues and people

Human beings have a tendency to assume that people see things and feel as they do. When in the meeting, participants discover different opinions on the issues, they become uncertain about their own position, seek actively to get more information about the issue, are able to take the perspective of the other members, and make an informed decision.

2) Conflicts can be motivating

Conflict in meetings actively involves people. They pay close attention to the issue.

3) Conflicts can produce better decisions

Conflicts tell us that people disagree, then we explore why they disagree. Eventually, the group finds flaws and tries to work upon them so that the outcome satisfies everyone.

4) Conflicts can produce cohesiveness among group members

When the participants experience and resolve conflicts successfully, the members develop ties that hold the group together.

Although the conflicts are beneficial, we all have seen how harmful they can be.

- Conflicts can cause bad feelings
- People at times, when disagreeing with each other, lose their temper. They might use hurtful language that may cause bad feelings and can spoil relationships forever.
- Conflicts can lower group cohesiveness.
- Not all conflicts lead to group cohesiveness. If people feel that they are not valued in the group, they may not like to contribute.
- Conflicts can be destructive

Major unresolved conflicts may lead to time waste without reaching the decision. Therefore it is important to manage the conflict and make the meetings productive.

7.9 MEETING ETIQUETTES

Meetings place you in front of employees and employers with whom you may not work on a regular basis. As a result, how one acts in the meetings could create a lasting impression. Barbara Pachter, a career coach and author of the book "The Essentials of Business Etiquette" suggests following 10 meeting etiquette you should know:

1) Be on time

To avoid wasting the time of yourself and others, make sure you come on time. It is beneficial to come prepared for the meeting ahead of time.

2) Make introductions

To know others and to let others know you, it is a good tradition to begin a meeting by introducing each member to the team. It should always start by introducing the person of the highest rank first.

3) Have a strong agenda

Strong agenda helps to keep the discussion on track. It is the facilitator's responsibility to get the discussion back on track if it gets off track.

4) Sit appropriately

The way you sit in the meeting helps you get involved and heard.

5) Speak up

Meetings are called to hear your opinions on issues. Do not sit quietly. Add your thoughts related to the topic being discussed and contribute qualitatively.

6) Understand the unwritten speaking rules

Some rules are universal. You may disagree with people, but rude and aggressive interjections may damage your reputation. Learn to interrupt politely.

7) Do not take phone calls during the meeting

It's very bad manners to talk on the phone whilst others are discussing something important. If the call is urgent, make an excuse and leave the room.

8) Do not drink and eat during the meeting

It is ok to eat or drink during the meeting if it is served to everyone. Avoid eating and drinking personal stuff as it may make noise or give off smells that are disruptive.

9) Clean up after yourself

It is unprofessional to leave the place dirty after yourself.

10) Do not save all your questions for the end

Ask your questions at the appropriate time. Keeping all the questions for the end may make others uneasy as they might like to end the meeting on time.

These etiquettes if, adhered to, enhance the professional behaviour and makes the meetings productive.

7.10 EFFECTIVE DECISION-MAKING IN GROUP COMMUNICATION

Every organisation's growth is driven by the ability of management to make effective decisions. The quality of decisions depends largely on the efficacy of communication within the organisation. For decision making, meetings are held at various levels in the organisation. Hence, communication plays an important role in reaching an effective decision.

Small group communication refers to the act of communication among three or more people for a common goal or purpose. They are used in different settings such as work groups, social events or influence groups. Small group communication is an essential part of group decision making and meetings are a way in which group communication works. Therefore, it is important to understand small group communication for effective decision-making. In terms of business communication, small groups are limited to achieving a specific objective. Small groups fulfil three different needs of an individual – instrumental, interpersonal and identity needs.

Let us discuss the functional theory of small group communication to understand how communication plays a role in the effective decision-making process.

Functional theory of communication

The functional theory, also called the functional theory of group communication, is a set of statements, beliefs, and claims that attempt to explain how and why communication affects the quality of decisions made by a group. It explains how communication influences group decision-making and how communication should be structured to make better decisions. This theory was first proposed by Dennis Gouran and Randy Hirokawa in 1983. They state that three influences shaped the theory - John Dewey's work on reflective thinking, Robert Bales' work on interaction process analysis, and Irving Janis' work on watchful decision-making.

In 1910, John Dewey proposed a method for problem-solving in his book ‘How We Think’. In this method he suggested that reflective thinking is the key to solving a problem and gave five steps which are as follows:

- Finding the difficulty or problem
- Where and what is the problem
- Proposing possible solutions

- Determining the consequences of the solution by reasoning and implication
- Accepting or rejecting a solution by experimenting or observing them

The second influence was of Robert Bale in his work Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) and he stated that small group communication is influenced by the ability of group members to deal with functional problems. He identified four functional problems which are–Adaption, Instrumental control, Expression and Integration. Adaptation and instrumental control relate to decision-making termed as task concerns. Whereas, expression and integration relate to the management of relationships termed as socio-emotional concerns. Bales suggested that a balance between these two is necessary for making a better decision. In IPA, he highlighted 12 categories out of which six were related to task functions (i.e. decision-making) and the other six are related to socio-emotional concerns.

Bales' work highlighted the role of interpersonal behaviour and personality in group communication. In 1970, Bale developed the Three Dimensional Model of Interpersonal Personality in the book **SYMLOG** (System for the Multiple Level Observation of Groups) which was considered to be an extension of IPA. This model helps in determining the personality of group members. In the present scenario, SYMLOG has been used as a tool to determine the different behaviour and personality of individuals as considered deemed fit for different organisational roles.

The third influence is Irving Janis's work on vigilant decision making. He suggested that groups sometimes fail in making effective decisions because of the pressure to reach a consensus on each team member during meetings. According to his work, a vigilant group should follow the following steps to reach a solution:

- Analyse all possible alternatives or solutions
- Analyse objectives to be achieved
- Examine all risks and benefits of alternatives
- Search all relevant information
- Unbiased processing of information
- Reassess alternatives concerning risks and benefits
- Planning implementation of selected alternatives along with contingency plan

Each of these influences highlights the functional nature of the communication. Hence, according to the functional theory, a group should adopt the following practices to achieve the purpose of a group meeting and make an effective decision:

- Identify the type of solutions that the problem requires. The solutions are based on whether the group is seeking to address a fact, speculation, value, or policy issue.
- Assess the qualities of an effective solution. Members of the group should create criteria that the preferred alternative must meet.
- Members of the group should come up with a wide range of possible alternatives for the problem.
- Members should critically evaluate all alternatives to determine what makes an effective solution. This criterion implies that group members have the necessary skills, knowledge, and objectivity.
- Choose the alternative that fulfils the criteria for an effective solution while comparing all available alternatives.

In light of these practices, communication plays three different roles in group communication – positive, disruptive and counteractive. Each of these roles is defined as follows:

- **Positive role:** The group is able to complete the functional requirements successfully.
- **Disruptive role:** It serves to create roadblocks that obstruct or prevent the group from meeting any of the requirements for effective decision-making.
- **Counteractive role:** It serves to nullify or neutralise a communicative act that has had a disruptive effect

It is evident that communication is used in a different sense to resolve conflicts and reach a consensus in group meetings. However, this theory was criticised by various researchers on various issues. One such issue relates to a lack of consideration for how individuals interact outside the group or create sub-groups. Another criticism revolves around the fixed set of conditions for functional communication. Further, the question of how a decision can be judged as good or bad limited the theory.

In response to these criticisms, Gouran and Hirokawa revised the theory in their book ‘Communication and Group Decision Making’. They added the relational dimension of groups in the process of decision-making. They introduced three dimensions – Affiliative, Cognitive and Egocentric. The affiliative dimension states that group members are unduly preoccupied with relationships. The cognitive dimension states that information processing is hampered. The egocentric dimension states that personal motivation dominates group goals. These dimensions may limit the entire process of decision-making to reach an effective decision. Therefore, as a response to criticism and these dimensions, the functional theory was extended further. The following practices were suggested, in addition to the initial five mentioned above:

- Make it apparent that group members want to make the best decision possible.
- Identify the resources that are essential to make such a decision.
- Identify the potential barriers to overcome.
- Specify the steps that must be taken to complete the task.
- Establish rules of interpersonal communication.
- Utilize appropriate solutions to overcome affiliative, cognitive, and egocentric restrictions that hinder the successful completion of basic task needs.
- Examine the group's decision-making process and, if necessary, revise any solutions reached.

These theories give an idea of how groups perform in the meetings and based on the performance of groups the decision is taken.

7.11 SUMMARY

Meetings have both advantages and disadvantages. To make effective use of meetings, a number of things need to be reviewed. The first and most important one is to identify the meeting's objective. Once it is clear, it is important to consider pre-meeting arrangements. This involves: who should be invited to the meeting, what should be the agenda, which additional information should be shared with the participants, and what should be the physical/ virtual arrangement. Overlooking any of these may impact the effectiveness of the meeting.

The unit highlights that conflicts are inevitable in meetings and are also essential for productive output. Handling the conflicts effectively will bring positive results which can be achieved by following proper meeting etiquette. The unit also discusses various theories for effective decision making.

7.12 KEYWORDS

Conflict: It is the interaction that occurs when the point of view and behaviour of one person do not match with others.

Agenda: It is a list or outline of things to be considered or done.

Time Keeper: It is a person appointed to mark and announce the time

Scribe is a copier of manuscripts.

Energy monitor: It is a person who monitors the engagement levels of attendees.

Moderator: S/he is one who presides over an assembly, meeting, or discussion.

Meeting Environment : It includes both the time and places a meeting is held.

Norm: It is an unwritten, overloaded, or poorly run meeting.

7.13 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) From the list given below, identify meeting types. Carry out internet research to learn about the need and purpose of the given meetings:

   a) Internal project review meeting

   b) Board of Directors meeting

   c) Town Hall meeting

   d) Media brief

2) Think about the project you worked on with others. Step back and reflect on the meetings you had with the project team members. How did the environment, topics, and participants contribute to the communication at those meetings?

3) How can a conflict be positive in meetings?

4) Remember a meeting in which you handled conflict? Have you tried a unique approach? Was that conflict turned out to be positive?

7.14 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 8 PRESENTATION SKILLS

Objectives

After reading this unit you should be able to:

- Understand the meaning of presentation;
- Understand the essentials of presentations;
- Prepare presentations;
- Analyses the function and types of visual aids;
- Comprehend the role of body language in presentations;
- Learn how to overcome the fear of public speaking.

Structure

8.1 Introduction

8.2 Meaning of Presentation

8.3 Types of Presentations

8.4 Planning the Presentation

8.5 Process of Presentation

8.6 Use of Visual Aids

8.7 Question and Answer Session

8.8 Glossophobia

8.9 Components of Effective Presentation

8.10 Summary

8.11 Keywords

8.12 Self–Assessment Questions

8.13 References and Further Readings

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Presentation skill is an art and it is an important mode of oral communication. This requires more focus and attention while presenting an idea or a concept. An important thing to note here is that presentations can be made to different groups. If a student is giving a presentation then s/he has to present in front of the faculty/experts. If it is a presentation in a business organisation then it can be to a specified group such as to the clients etc. This requires specific skills as per the requirements of the organisation. In this unit, we will be learning different aspects of presentation with respect to business communication.

8.2 MEANING OF PRESENTATION

Presentations are a way of communicating ideas and information to a group. The objective of communication is to make your message understood and remembered. In order to achieve this, the presenter must be clear, coherent, articulate and convincing. A presentation puts you on display before your audience. Therefore, in order to be effective and impressive in your presentation, you need to prepare before you actually deliver. Even experts in communication need to plan and prepare their presentations in advance.

Most presentations either inform the audience about something or try to persuade the audience about a product, service, an idea or a concept. Hence, we often hear of sales presentations for existing or prospective clients, as well as presentations on projects, reports, proposals and updates on various business activities for business associates, seniors, colleagues and subordinates.

However, these days presentations have also become an important part of the recruitment process in business organisations. Perhaps this is because the job market has become so competitive that job interviews are not enough for organisations to gauge the skills of their applicants. Therefore, in many organisations, the short-listed applicants are asked to make presentations before the selection panel. Through presentations the interviewers get an opportunity to look at the ability of the applicants to identify and organize appropriate material on a specific topic as well as to support and illustrate ideas. On the other hand, the candidates have a chance to show their public speaking skills, their ability to communicate to an audience, to persuade and convince and to display their confidence and leadership abilities.

Thus, in brief the purpose of a presentation is -

- To introduce a new product or service
- To present a new business plan
- To market a product or increase sales of a product
- To give a talk in a seminar/ or a conference
- To give information on any issue
- To analyze a report or project
- To display oneself in an interview

8.3 TYPES OF PRESENTATIONS

The basic purpose of a presentation is to inform, persuade or motivate. Based on the purpose for which a presentation is being made. They can be divided into the following categories.

1. **Informative Presentation**: As the name suggests, this type of presentation gives information to the audience. This information can be

in the form of details of rules and regulations, or policies of the organisation. It also includes giving information to the employees, the media and the public.

2. **Persuasive Presentation**: This kind of presentation is generally about selling something. It intends to convince the audience about the goodness of a product or action. This kind of a presentation can also persuade the organisational heads to accept proposals on any issue.

3. **Motivational Presentation**: They are designed to motivate or enthuse people on an issue or about a programme. Generally, this kind of a presentation is made to influence people to accept a new policy, initiative or idea of the organisation.

The presentation can also be classified on the basis of mode of delivery. There are generally four kinds of presentation delivery -

- Impromptu presentations
- Extempore presentations
- Scripted presentations
- Memorized presentations

The mode chosen for delivering a presentation depends on the audience present and the situation in which one is giving a presentation. In a formal situation, one generally resorts to Memorized or Scripted presentation. Impromptu and Extempore presentations are made in informal settings.

For a presentation to be effective the presenter not only has to make her/his presentation interesting and relevant, s/he also has to prepare himself/herself well to make an effective presentation. Some of the things s/he needs to keep in mind to make the presentation effective are as follows:

- Coping with fear or nervousness;
- Understanding the audience and connecting with them;
- Making the presentation relevant and interesting for the audience;
- Confidently handling the question answer session

8.4 PLANNING THE PRESENTATION

Planning a presentation requires a lot of preparation before it takes a final shape. Depending on the focus of the presentation, you decide the strategy or sequence of ideas. One of the most common and effective strategies used by most people, is the STAR STRATEGY for planning a presentation. According to this strategy the presentation needs to go through the five filters of WHO, WHY, WHERE, WHEN, and WHAT before it takes a final shape. These five filters help to polish and chisel the presentation before it is ready for the audience. Now let us discuss these five filters in detail.

1. **Target audience** (**Who):** This is the first filter which helps the speaker to understand his/her audience. For this, the following checklist can be followed to assess the target audience.

   - Educational background
   - Nature of job profile
   - Basic attitudes
   - Common language
   - Number of people attending

   If the speaker knows the basic background of the audience, then it will help him/her to approach the audience in a more effective manner.

2. **Purpose (Why):** This is the second filter which looks at the reason(s) for making a presentation. The following questions need to be answered when trying to focus on the 'WHY' aspect. These are:

   - End result;
   - Objectives/needs of the audience.

   When the purpose is defined, the speaker may start the presentation giving a general background of the subject or straightaway moving to the specialised part of the subject. Usually the purpose of any presentation is to:

   - Presenting a new point of view;
   - Additional information;
   - Demonstration of a service, product or a system;
   - Selling a concept/idea.

   There can be many more new areas to define the purpose depending on the situation. The crux here is that a clearly defined purpose helps in making a presentation more effective.

1. **Place (Where):** The third filter is the place or location of the presentation. This is important for the speaker as it will help him/her to understand the ambience, seating arrangements, sound system etc. If the speaker knows the 'where' of the presentation s/he will make himself/herself comfortable before making the presentation.

2. **Time (When):** The next part is to know the time of the presentation. This includes for how long the presentation will run. This will answer the following queries:

   - Time available;
   - Time is taken to complete formalities;
   - Time available for question and answer session.

This filter is important as it will help the speaker to check his/her time accordingly and make the presentation precise. This will also help him/her to prepare for the presentation within that time period to retain the interest of the audience.

3. **Content (What):** This is the most important part of the presentation as a wrong choice of the subject matter may result in the presentation going wrong even if the presentation has been prepared nicely. The speaker should concentrate only on the most essential parts of the subject rather than covering everything.

Therefore, while planning the presentation, the star-strategy should be followed to make the presentation effective.

8.5 PROCESS OF PRESENTATION

Every presentation follows a classic pattern of **Introduction**, **body** and **conclusion.** These three are essential components for making a presentation. A presenter should carefully prepare each one of these in order to make an effective presentation. Let us understand each one of these in-depth below:

Introduction

This part is the first step while preparing for a presentation. Introduction should be such that it builds the inquisitiveness and the interest of the target audience which will make an impact for the further course of presentation. The following points should be kept in mind while preparing for the introduction :

- Introduce yourself
- State your purpose
- Relate subject to the audience
- Give a brief outline

An introduction to the presentation needs to be imaginative and interesting to capture the attention of the audience. A good introduction will motivate the audience to sit through the entire presentation. You can follow the following ways to make an impactful introduction:

- Rhetorical question
- Provocative quote
- Interesting anecdote
- Good joke
- The statement of the problem
- Description of the topic’s importance to the audience
- Piece of statistical information presented memorably
- Summary statement of the structure
- Definition of the purpose of the presentation

Activity 1

In any presentation the introduction is crucial. Certainly, some things are essential in an introduction and others are useful. Here is a list of what could be included in an introduction. Mark them according to how necessary they are from a scale of 1 to 3 where 1 means essential, 2 means useful and 3 means not necessary.

- Subject / title of talk
- Introduction of oneself, job title, etc.
- Reference to questions and/or discussion
- Reference to the programme of the day
- Reference to how long you are going to speak for
- Reference to the visual aids you plan to use
- The scope of your talk: what is and is not included
- An outline of the structure of your talk
- A summary of the conclusions

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The Body

This is the middle part of the presentation. In this part the main content of the theme is developed which should be precise so that the attention of the target audience is retained. This part should focus on the following points -

- Do not present more than four main points/ideas
- Support main ideas with facts
- Use signposting
- Use visuals

Conclusion

This is the last part of the presentation. This part summarises the whole concept of the presentation and also gives the future scope on the topic considered. This part consists of the following point:

- Reiterate/reinforce what you have said/summarize main points
- Do not present new ideas

- Make a conclusion or recommendation, if necessary
- Relate conclusion to the audience
- Invite questions

An effective way to conclude is to review the points and connect them to the introduction. This also helps with the overall coherence of the talk. Restate the most important point of the presentation and connect the conclusion with the main idea. This helps the audience retain what you want them to remember.

If the presentation was about a problem, the problem can be restated. Then provide the solution in no more than two sentences. A timeline for implementing the solution is even better. The audience must leave with something valuable or beneficial for them.

Ending with a quotation or punch line usually leaves a great impact on the audience and helps them to connect with the main theme through this exit line. The ending should help you interact with the audience at an emotional level. This is possible only when you do not read from your notes and move from the reading stand toward the audience. It is important to have sustained eye contact at this point just as it is in the beginning of the presentation. Hence, the conclusion must be thought out carefully and presented effectively.

8.6 USE OF VISUAL AIDS

Most presentations deal with statistics and other complex data which would be confusing if it were described in words without any visual support. It is here that visual aids come to our rescue. They help us to present figures, to make comparisons and contrasts, to project future performances and to talk about past, present and future trends, thus serving the dual purpose of enabling the presenter to deal with this kind of information easily and making it possible for listeners to understand these clearly. A variety of visual aids like flowcharts, line graphs, bar graphs, pie charts, pictograms, maps, tables, diagrams, photographs etc. can be used for this purpose. Visual aids also make a presentation more interesting. Moreover, they help you to cut down on the amount of talking one has to do.

However, you must ensure that your visuals are relevant, appropriate and clear. Never overload them with information. Effective presenters introduce and highlight visual information briefly and clearly, making sure they allow their audience time to absorb the information. We must use visuals to reinforce and clarify, and not to overwhelm the audience. There are many multimedia presentation software which can be used while preparing a presentation. We will discuss those in unit 13 on technology and communication.

Box 1: Checklist for using visual aids

1. Prepare each visual carefully and separately.
2. Check whether the visual really depicts what you are saying.
3. Make sure the visuals are legible like font size and colour
4. Find effective headlines.
5. Keep design and content simple.
6. Use bullet points.
7. Reduce text to a minimum.
8. Always prepare the audience for visuals.
9. Present information clearly and logically

Activity 2

a. Give two examples of business areas where it is advisable for the presenter to use visual aids to present information.

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b. Give two functions that visuals help us to perform easily and effectively.

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c. Give two do's and don'ts for the use of visual aids.

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d. Mention two major benefits of using visual aids.

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8.7 QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

No presentation is complete and satisfactory until you have successfully handled your question answer session. In a typical presentation the presenter talks almost all the time. The only interactive part of a presentation is the question answer or discussion at the end.

The question answer option puts you in a superior position compared to the audience. This means that you are seen as an expert and must be well prepared to be able to answer all queries from the audience. On the other

hand, when you invite the audience to a discussion, you are more or less on equal terms with the audience. They can contribute as much, or more to the discussion than you do.

There can be two policies on question answers. If you are confident and knowledgeable about your topic, you may allow members of the audience to ask you questions during the course of the presentation. But if you feel that this would disturb the rhythm or flow of your talk or put you off, it is better to invite your audience questions at the end of your presentation. Whatever be your policy, this must be communicated to the listeners in the beginning of your presentation.

Questions give you a chance to respond to the concerns of your audience and to clarify any doubts or confusions. Look at them as an opportunity for you to support your argument and reinforce your message. They also give you a chance to learn more about your audience.

How can you best prepare yourself for the audience's questions? This issue should be addressed by you when you make an analysis of your expected audience as part of your preparation. This is the right time for you to predict audience concerns and questions. The next logical step is to think about answers for them.

Remember that good preparation is the key to handling questions to your satisfaction. Do not confine your reading and preparation of the topic to what you plan to include in your talk. Gather additional information. A comprehensive and in depth understanding of your topic will come in handy during the question answer session or discussion.

It is also essential that you be a good listener. Make sure you hear and understand the full question before answering. Ask for clarification of anything you don't understand. Do not preempt the questioner by answering before the question is fully stated.

Also be straightforward. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't guess. Admit you don't know; offer to get the answer and provide it to your questioner.

Activity 3

1. Here are some tips on what makes a good presentation. Can you think of a keyword / phrase that best describes each tip?

    i. Take interest in what you are talking about and enjoy the experience. Be energetic during your presentation.

    ii. Plan beforehand on how you will begin the presentation, approach the important points and how you will end.

    iii. Speak for your audience and not yourself. Take every opportunity to show how much common ground you share with them. Address their goals, needs and concerns.

iv. Do not use commonplace or widely known information. Have something new and relevant to say.

v. Don't put mundane tables or figures and long lines of text on the slides. Experiment with visuals that catch the attention of your audience.

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2. Here are some more clues on essentials of presentations. Complete them by inserting the appropriate words:

i. A good presenter must have a sense of ……or the ability to make people laugh.

ii. Check everything you need before you are due to speak – the room, seating, visibility, acoustics and equipment. Leave nothing to …….

iii. …… the first minute of your presentation to the last detail.

iv. Try to ……. your opening words. This will help you to sound confident and in …….

v. Stay connected with the audience. …… to their reactions if you can.

vi. Keep your sentences short and simple. Be ……

vii. Never talk …… to your audience. Treat them as equals.

viii. Let your visuals ……... for themselves. Make comments on them or analyze them. Never read them.

ix. Learn from other speakers but don't try to copy them. Develop your own ……

x. Treat questions as an opportunity to get your …… across better.

8.8 GLOSSOPHOBIA

Phobia is termed as fear. Glossophobia is a fear of speaking in public. This is termed to be a deterrent while making a presentation. The ones who suffer from glossophobia often suffer from fear and anxiety, especially while speaking in front of a group of people. This makes them avoid public speaking. In business communication, this type of phobia is disadvantageous.

Therefore, it is important for organisations to diagnose the causes and provide remedial solutions to the employees suffering from glossophobia. It is a common type of phobia.

Overcoming Glossophobia

Most of us, even those who have reached the highest echelons of their profession struggle with public-speaking anxiety. Nervousness or anxiety in certain situations is normal, and public speaking is no exception. To overcome glossophobia, we will discuss certain tips which may help a person to become a good public speaker. These tips are as follows –

a. **Get organized:** Ahead of time, carefully plan out the information you want to present, including any props, or audio-visual aids. The more organized you are, the less nervous you will be. Always have an outline on a small card to stay on track. If possible, visit the place where you will be speaking and review the available equipment before your presentation so there are no last-minute technical hiccups.

b. **Knowledge of the topic.** The better you know the content of your presentation the less likely you will make a mistake or get off track. This will also help you increase your confidence level

c. **Practice:** Practice your complete presentation several times. You may do it in front of someone whom you are comfortable with and ask for feedback or make a video of the presentation, watch it and see places where it can be improved.

d. **Challenge specific worries:** When you are afraid of something, you may overestimate the likelihood of bad things happening. List your specific worries, then directly challenge them by identifying probable and alternative solutions.

e. **Visualize success:** Imagine that your presentation is going well. Positive thoughts will help decrease some of your anxiety.

f. **Deep breathing:** This can be very calming. Take two or more deep breaths slowly before you get up to go to the podium.

g. **Focus on presentation:** People mainly pay attention to new information. They may not notice your nervousness. If the audience does notice that you are nervous, they are likely to be sympathetic and want your presentation to be a success. Therefore, it is important to focus on the presentation and not on the audience.

h. **Do not fear a moment of silence:** If you lose track of what you are saying or start to feel nervous and your mind goes blank, it may seem like you have been silent for an eternity. In reality, it is probably only a few seconds. Even if it is longer, it is likely your audience would not mind a pause to consider what you have been saying. Just take a few slow, deep breaths and continue.

i. **Recognize your success:** After your presentation, give yourself a pat on the back. It may not have been perfect, but chances are you are far more

critical of yourself than your audience is. See if any of your specific worries actually occurred. Everyone makes mistakes. Look at any mistakes you made as an opportunity to improve your skills.

8.9 COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE PRESENTATION

To make a presentation effective, one should try to capture the interest of his/her audience right from the beginning by asking rhetorical questions, telling an interesting story, quotation or joke, relating what you are saying to the audience, using illustrations, eye-contact and body language. One must not just read out the slides or his/her notes. In this section, we will discuss the components of the effective presentation.

A. Making a Connect

In all the presentations connecting with the audience is the most crucial part. Therefore, it is important to discuss this aspect.The first few minutes of the presentation are very precious and crucial. If you fail to arrest the attention of your audience in the beginning, you may lose it forever. You make your first impression even before you have opened your mouth to speak. It has to do with the way you look and carry yourself.

Your dress needs to be neat, smart and appropriate to the occasion. It is mostly formal for presentations. The next thing to pay attention to would be your gait and posture. Your body communicates different impressions to the audience. People not only listen to you; they also watch you. Slouching tells them you are indifferent or you do not care, even though you might care a great deal. On the other hand, displaying good posture tells your audience that you know what you are doing and you care deeply about it. Also, a good posture helps you to speak more clearly and effectively. While you need to be upright and look confident, you may need to guard against looking too stiff and uncomfortable. The key is to look relaxed and comfortable and at ease with your surroundings. Reaching the venue of your presentation well in time could be immensely helpful in getting you comfortable with the place.

Eye contact is another crucial factor. It signals interest in others and helps you to connect with the audience. The audience responds to you better when you look them in the eyes. Do not keep your eyes away from the audience for too long, even when you are attending to equipment or looking at your slides.

The expressions you wear on your face transmit a great deal. A smile is contagious. When you smile at somebody, chances are that s/he will smile back at you. A smile spreads happiness around you as it makes others smile in response. It also transmits happiness, friendliness, warmth, liking and positivity.

The voice is probably the most valuable tool you possess. It is the vehicle that carries most of the content that you wish to pass on to the audience. Hence the presenter needs to use his/ her voice to maximum advantage. You must work on the speed at which you speak as well as the volume. The pitch and tone are other areas that need your attention. It is a good idea to practice

before a colleague or a friend and get feedback on whether you are too fast, too high, too soft, etc. Do not speak in a monotone as it drifts the attention of the listener. Modulate your voice. Good speakers lower their voice to draw the audience in, and raise it to make a point. Warmth of tone and the right emotions to accompany your words can help you to connect with the audience instantly.

Lastly, do not forget that the audience will forgive a lot if the speaker is enthusiastic. If you are interested and enthused, you will pass this on to your listeners. But do not confuse enthusiasm with loudness.

So now you know that presentations are not just about well researched and painstakingly gathered material, well organized and structured but they are a lot about how you combine the human element with the content to reach out and connect.

Activity 4

State whether the following statements are True or False. Mark 'doesn't say' for statements that the passage doesn't deal with.

i. The speaker must reach the venue on time.

ii. You should be formally dressed for a presentation.

iii. People spend more time watching you than listening to you.

iv. You can feel relaxed by talking occasionally to the audience.

v. Use your smile sparingly during a presentation.

vi. Your voice is the means of transport for your words.

vii. Your friends can help you out by letting you know whether you are making the desired impact.

viii. The content of the presentation is more important than the human element.

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B. Language Focus

Language focus puts the emphasis on the structure of the language which is being used in the presentation. One should carefully use the phrases while talking about visuals and making comparisons.

For instance, while introducing a visual in the presentation one can use following phrases -

- First of all, let's look at…

- I'd like to show you…
- Have a look at this…
- This graph shows / represents…
- Here we can see…
- As you can see in this graph/table…

Whereas one can use, the following phrases while talking or explaining the visual-

- On analyzing this graph…
- What is interesting in this graph…
- It is evident from this diagram…
- This visual clearly indicates…
- On taking a closer look…
- Here you see a comparison between…
- A close look at these two pie charts shows…
- In sharp contrast to …

Here are some useful phrases which one can use to conclude his/her presentation or to give recommendations at the end of the presentation –

- I'd like to summarize/sum up…
- At this stage I would like to run through/over the main points...
- So, as we have seen today...
- On the basis of my arguments I propose that…
- As a result, we suggest that…
- My final comments concern…
- I would like to finish by reminding everyone that…
- I would now like to invite you to a discussion…

C. Body Language

Facial expression is a fundamental contributor to effective communication. The scientific study of body language is called kinesics. Proper posture is also important for good communication. Leaning backwards, swinging the legs, resting the head backwards in a reclining chair or swiveling too frequently or playfully — are all bad manners. Bend forward a little, keeping the elbows at the side of the trunk of your body, to indicate that you are listening attentively.

Silence is a powerful if intriguing medium of communication. It has a dramatic impact. Silence can be interpreted in more than one way. Silence can have a dramatic effect in presentations or speeches to draw the attention of everyone — those who are chatting quietly, or even napping. However, if it is not used appropriately, it is open to misinterpretation as lack of

preparation on the part of the speaker. Therefore, Silence can be appropriate or inappropriate depending upon the situation

Here are some tips to make an effective presentation -

- Dress appropriately for the occasion
- Hold the attention of the audience by using visuals and audio clips to break the monotony
- Be clear and concise
- Ideas and information should be sequenced well
- Use of humour in the presentation
- Familiarise yourself with the venue
- Be punctual
- Maintain eye contact with the audience
- Have positive body language – enthusiasm, confidence and sincerity

Activity 5

Assume you have to give an important presentation at your workplace. Keeping this in mind, suggest a possible phrase for each of the prompts below.

i. Greet your audience

ii. Introduce yourself

iii. Give the title of your talk

iv. Describe the structure of your talk

v. Explain that the audience can interrupt if they want

vi. Say something about the length of your talk

vii. Say a colleague will be showing a video later

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8.10 SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt about the different aspects of presentations. They are commonly used in workplaces for the purpose of communication in a variety of situations that range from reporting about the progress of a department or the progress of an individuals' work to selling products and services. Besides, they are often part of the recruitment process. The

objective of most presentations is either to inform or persuade the listeners about something. You have also learnt and practiced commonly used structures for presentations, the importance of an outline and how to write outlines. The function of visuals and the extent to which they help deal more effectively with content is also discussed. The essentials of presentations like connecting with the audience, language focus etc. have been discussed. The importance of suitable and impressive endings in presentations is emphasized along with the question-answer session. Finally, the importance of body language and ways of overcoming fear of public speaking are deliberated.

8.11 KEYWORDS

Presentation: A way of communicating ideas and information in a group.

Visual Aids: These are graphic representations of ideas or symbols.

Glossophobia: It is the fear of speaking in public.

8.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) What do you understand about presentation skills?

2) How is a presentation planned? Explain.

3) What is the role of visual aids in presentation?

4) Explain the concept of glossophobia.

8.13 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK 3
WRITTEN COMMUNICATION AT WORK

BLOCK 3 WRITTEN COMMUNICATION AT WORK

This block has 3 units and all the units cover different aspects of written communication which are important to organisations.

Unit 9 Basics of Written Business Communication: This unit deals with basics of written communication which discusses the role of accuracy, clarity and how effective a written communication can be done. It also discusses the purpose of writing.

Unit 10 Short Business Correspondence: In this unit we will discuss the need and importance of short business correspondence. We will also learn different types of business letters like order letter, refusal letter, enquiry letter etc. based on different situations.

Unit 11 Long Business Correspondence: This unit discusses the aspect of business correspondence in more detail. Here you will learn how to develop reports be it long or short reports. The unit also discusses the difference between report and proposal.

UNIT 9 BASICS OF WRITTEN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit you should be able to:

- Understand the basics of writing;
- Develop a mind map;
- Learn the process of writing.

Structure

9.1 Introduction

9.2 Need for Written Communication

9.3 Features of Written Communication

9.4 Process of Writing

9.5 Summary

9.6 Keywords

9.7 Self-Assessment Questions

9.8 References and Further Readings

9.1 INTRODUCTION

No matter where we are or what we do, we engage with writing daily. We text and write emails. We make lists when we must shop or plan a 'to-do' profile of our daily activities. We write assignments and exams if we are students. At the workplace we write reports, project proposals and other documents. And yet, we do not call ourselves writers and believe that only people who write for a living, are writers.

Writing is essentially a communication tool that is used to convey emotions or exchange information. If you have used this tool to talk to your friends, colleagues, and family, you are already a writer. However, in order to be a good writer, you need to read good models of writing, have knowledge about writing and above all, you need to practice constantly .

The problem is with how we approach writing. Across schools and colleges, we tend to approach writing as an activity that has to be completed as a single task. However, writing is not just one task. It is made up of many smaller tasks, happening both consciously and unconsciously. When we do not value and recognise the smaller tasks, which go into the writing of a piece, we may end up feeling overwhelmed. Instead, if we follow a step-by-step process, it makes the act of writing more systematic and ensures we have enough time to think about and assess the quality of our own writing.

Moreover, we may tend to think of writing as a 'product'. When students are asked to write an assignment, they are thinking of the final product that has to be submitted, not the 'process' through which one creates and develops the piece of writing. As a result, many resort to copying an existing model or template of writing rather than going on a creative journey to produce an original piece of writing. This creates a dependence on the template or formula that one has to follow, instead of learning to develop one's original thoughts and arguments. Writing is essentially a creative exercise. Through the act of writing, we aim to create, develop, and refine our thinking. **The process approach** becomes a suitable model for this. Therefore, to become a good writer, you may have to first ensure that you have your basics in place. So, it is necessary to start with understanding the need and importance of writing.

9.2 NEED FOR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

As human beings, we observe and process a vast amount of information that we get from the world around us. We react to what we see, and these reactions make us unique individuals. If we document these reactions and observations regularly, we create records of our personal history. Writing is thus an important tool for documentation. In recent times, however, writing has expanded to become an important professional skill. Since we are connected by online networks which demand constant communication, we are expected to write concise and clear texts. All professional workplaces now demand strong writing skills from their employees and it is an important ingredient for upward mobility.

Beyond these obvious and practical functions, we write for the following reasons:

- **Write to experience**: People who take photographs have often talked about the importance of capturing the beauty of a moment. In a similar way, writing can motivate or demotivate the employees of an organisation. If you have a unique moment that is worth sharing in your workplace then that can be done through the writing. Either way, writing provides you with a medium to share your ideas and experiences.
- **Write to think**: As humans, we are constantly inundated with thoughts about our daily lives, ambitions, and insecurities. To make careful choices and decisions, we must express what we think. Writing gives us an opportunity to articulate our complex thoughts.
- **Write to create**: Words have the power to carry inspiring messages. There is a reason why we remember great novelists, thinkers and scientists and find wisdom in what they say. To write well is to create a piece of art that stands the test of time.
- **Write to learn**: Writing can help us remember what we read and study. When we take notes, we learn to record and analyse information. This is one of the important parts for the businesses.

Activity 1

1) What kind of writing in your opinion is important for organisations? Justify.

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2) What kind of writing in your opinion should be avoided at the workplace and why?

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As you are probably aware, writing helps you develop many skills which are helpful for your academic life as well as for your work life.Writing helps in communicating one's ideas and thoughts.

- Writing helps you remember what you are reading, by helping you to make coherent notes, analyse, synthesize and summarise information from different sources.
- Writing as you read by taking notes, summarizing, responding to assumptions/arguments in a text, makes you a better reader. This kind of reflection enhances your understanding and helps you develop new insights. It helps you become a critical thinker.
- Writing will also foster your personal development. When you write about events in the organisation, it helps you understand the significance of these events. In other words, you become a more reflective and thinking person.
- At the workplace, you will need to write impressively to get jobs; while in the job you will be expected to write effective and correctly worded emails, memos, reports, proposals and so on. If your language is faulty or your ideas are ill-organised, it will affect your career enhancement.

9.3 FEATURES OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Many people believe that people who are good at writing do not need to spend a lot of time learning to write – they are born writers. Writing comes naturally to them. However, this is not true. Writing research shows that all

good writers also keep learning how to write and they constantly practice their skills. So, learning to write is essential for developing writing skills. To be an effective communicator one must adhere to the following characteristics of writing:

- **Extensive reading**: Reading extensively will enable you to become a better writer. In personal as well as professional life a reading habit helps in developing better communication skills
- **Constant writing:** One of the best ways to become a good writer is by constantly writing. Practice makes writing more profound and the words that flow have more clarity.
- **Word conscious/word seeker:** Good vocabulary helps in placing the appropriate words while writing which will help in transmitting the message with more clarity. This is very much important in the business world.
- **Purpose of writing:** It is very important to be aware of the purpose for which you are writing and have knowledge of who your readers are. This will make your writing more focused and precise. Whatever the writing situation, most of us as writers have various purposes in mind.
- **Target audience**: Remember, most writing is meant to be read by others. In the business world, the audience is quite specific and communication to the employer or other stakeholders is made through e-mails, memos, reports etc. or a job application.
- **Understanding of the subject:** The next step is to attempt to understand your subject or topic. Few writers can have a complete understanding of their subject or topic when they begin to write. Remember, 'writing is not something you do after thinking, but it is something which helps you to think'.

Activity 2

Can you recall your earliest experience of writing at your workplace? What did you write?

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9.4 PROCESS OF WRITING

Writing is a complex process which involves thinking and composing texts. When we write, we have ideas and these ideas come to us as words or phrases. These words or phrases are then logically placed in sentences which

are then combined to form paragraphs. Ultimately, paragraphs are put together to form a coherent text. Though the process of creating a text may vary from person to person and text type to text type, there are a few basic steps that can help us demystify this process.

Writers, therefore, plan and then revise their plan, draft and then revise their drafts, write and then rewrite. This is known as **the process approach to writing** and it is important to follow such an approach. There are different steps involved in the process of writing. These are explained in detail below:

Step 1: Understanding your reader - Who is it for?

Before one begins the process of writing, it is important to identify the reader. Is the reader your boss? Or are you writing a project proposal for venture capitalists? Either way, knowing the reader is the first step in the writing process.

If we closely examine our writing activities, we will see that we write differently based on who the reader is and what genre of writing we are attempting. It can be a formal as well as informal form of communication.

Once you identify the reader, the next step is to develop a profile of the reader. Are you writing for a digital audience? If yes, you may have to consider keeping the length of your text short. Is your reader a potential employer? If yes, you may have to use a formal tone when you write. Now the question arises as to how one can create a reader's profile. Let us learn how to create a reader's profile.

Creating a reader's profile:

The following list of questions can help you create a reader's profile:

1) Who is my reader? Am I addressing one person or am I addressing a diverse group of individuals?
2) Are they familiar with what I say? If not, then what should I tell them so that they follow what I write? What do they already know?
3) Why should they be interested in what I say?
4) What is the best way to communicate?
5) Should I use a particular structure, tone, or style when I communicate? What genre should I use?
6) What will they gain after reading?

Activity 3

Write a proposal where you want to improve the living conditions of a group of people as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity of your organisation. Who will be your reader and why? Discuss.

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Step 2: Finding the Purpose - What is your intent?

Now that you know your audience, it is time to identify the purpose behind your writing exercise. You need to do that to ensure the following:

- Your audience will understand what you are writing about and why it is important to you and to them.
- You will understand why you, your superiors, and your organisation needs to know about the subject.
- You will be able to identify and gather the information that is most relevant to your readers and your goals.

Step 3: Starting the Writing Process

Sometimes, when we sit down to write, we may feel the need to discuss everything under the sun about the topic that we chose. Or we may get stuck and cannot write at all. In such situations, it is always good to **just start writing**. Ideas, if you have noticed, gain coherence and clarity when you put them down on paper. Free writing is therefore a good strategy to develop your ideas. Once you have enough ideas on paper, you can then choose what you want for the subject.

Step 4: Developing Ideas - How to research?

Conducting research is a crucial component of the writing process. Here are a few tips that can help you with conducting your research**:**

- **Internet Research**

At the brainstorming stage, you will have several ideas in mind for your proposed topic. It might be a good idea to capture them in your mind map and this might make it easier to narrow the scope of your topic as you think along. You can start by doing basic internet research. At this stage, you can note down key points such as definitions, history, and recent developments so that you have a fair understanding of the topic.

- **Identifying credible sources**

Now that you have an overview about your topic, it is important to identify reliable information. You must find reliable sources to support the information that you present in your writing. To find reliable sources, you must check the following:

1) Who is the writer? Are they qualified to write about this topic?
2) Where is the information from? Is the website a reliable source?
3) Does the information agree with what other sources have also said?
4) Can the information be verified?

- **Library research**

A few decades back, libraries were the primary sources of information. While the internet has helped us find information at record speed, it can also not

have the right answers for some of our queries. In such contexts, you can visit a library and find credible vetted resources that can help you with your research.

- **Organise and label your research**

Research can thoroughly overwhelm you if you do not organise the information that you have. When you collect information through internet or library research, organise them into folders and label them correctly. If you are reading articles on your browser, it would be good to bookmark the link so that you can return to them whenever you need. There are also online tools like Pocket that will help you save links online.

Step 5: Writing a plan

After the free writing that you do**,** it is important to write an outline. This may be in points and remember these points will be changed if required. In fact, your plan must be dynamic and flexible. You can also use mind maps to understand your topic better. Let us discuss how to create mind maps.

- **Mind maps**

Sometimes, visualising what you have in mind can help you understand your ideas better. Visual tools like mind maps can be used to capture your initial ideas. Created around a single theme or concept, they can also be used to understand relationships between different sub-themes or ideas, if any.

Creating a mind map

Mind maps can be created using the combination of colour coding, short text, doodles, short phrases, division of knowledge or information etc. to make it an effective and active tool of communication. Mind maps can be made with the help of e-tools which are available on the internet. These can be used to explain the ideas effectively.

Now let us look at a mind map of a business plan as shown in figure 1.

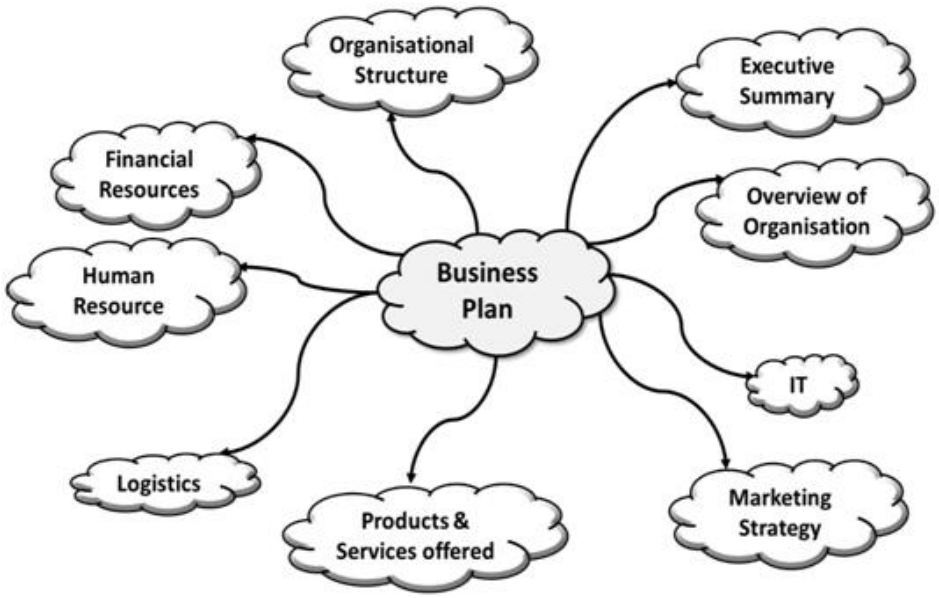

Figure 1: Mind-map of a business plan

- **Asking Questions**

Other than mind maps, we can also consider asking questions about the concept/theme. For example, if you wish to write to your boss about the improvement and re-launch of a product that your company had designed, you could ask yourself the following questions:

1) What is the product?
2) What were the customer complaints? And why?
3) What were the good points of the product? Why?
4) What are the improvements suggested by the research team?
5) How soon can the changes be made?
6) How should we advertise the improvements?
7) When should the launch be held?

If you answer the questions given above, it will help you understand the process of re-launching the product better. This understanding can then help you structure your writing. In a similar manner, you can ask yourself a set of probing questions so that they provide you with enough ideas.

The questions given above are some examples that you could use when you brainstorm. You could use them or use your own questions to help you with your writing process.

Activity 4

Think of a business plan. Create a mind map of your brainstorming process for a business plan.

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Step 7: Structuring - How to Outline?

An outline prepares the skeletal structure of your writing. Since you have brainstormed and researched on your topic, you have a vast amount of information in hand. Therefore, it is good to create an outline that can help you organise the information logically.

Typically, most business writings have a structure where the information is broadly categorised into – Introduction, Body and Conclusion. Introduction, as the name suggests, introduces the concept/theme to the reader and tells the reader what to expect. It usually has an interesting hook that captures the interest of the reader followed by a quick overview of the topic. The body is the spine of your writing. It is in this section that you present your arguments,

evidence, or ideas to the reader. Finally, the conclusion sums up the writing and gives the reader an understanding about your intent and purpose.

Activity 5

You have been asked by your organisation to attend a conference on "Improving the Carbon footprints at the Workplace". Write a technical trip report on the conference giving details of your own contribution to it. (250 words)

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Step 8:Putting it on paper - How to write?

So far, we have discussed planning methods and strategies that could help with the writing process. But how do we start writing? This is an interesting question because preparations and plans do not translate to writing.

To write, we must sit at a desk and write to meet our deadline. This means that we must push our brains to construct coherent sentences, paragraphs, and texts when we write.

Many of us may feel anxious about writing. We commit to or are given deadlines but fail to meet them due to procrastination or lack of prioritization. We may also think that what we write is not good enough. In such contexts, the following writing tips can be useful:

- **Free writing**: We may think that we need to churn good sentences as soon as we start writing. This need for perfection can prevent us from actual writing and make us feel anxious. In the first stage of writing, your task is to put information on paper. Take the plunge and think freely. Forget about errors and typos when you write. Your task at this stage is to write and not edit.
- **Concentrate**: Our attention span has reduced considerably with the internet. We are constantly distracted by text alerts and notifications that we find it hard to focus. Writing demands focus and concentration. So, cut out all distractions when you sit down to write. Let your mind only be in contact with your writing.
- **Make writing a habit**: As people with responsibilities, we juggle several tasks at the same time. Writing takes a backseat when we prioritise other work which we find easier to do. To avoid this, it is good to set aside a designated space and time for your writing. If you have some free time in the morning or at night, consider blocking this time for your writing.

- **Time yourself**: Set a timer for ten minutes and write without taking a break. At the end of ten minutes, take a 5-minute break. This will train your mind to maintain constant contact with your writing and prevent you from feeling overwhelmed with the writing process.

- **Talk to someone:** Writing often makes us feel insecure and lonely. The fact that you have no one around to read what you write can prevent you from actively working on your writing. To avoid this, speak to a friend/family member/colleague who could give you feedback. These insights could be incorporated into your writing.

Activity 6

Time yourself for fifteen minutes and write about an unusual experience at the workplace. Remember to avoid distractions while you are at it.

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Step 9: Reworking the Draft - How to Revise?

The act of writing is incomplete without the act of reading and revising. To write is to also read and then rewrite what we write. Usually, what you write in your first draft may be messy. It could be a tangled bunch of ideas and half formed thoughts you communicated on paper at one go. This means that you must return to your draft and 'clean' the copy before it goes to the reader.

Revising is thus an opportunity to critically examine your writing. When you revise, you can rethink and change what you write. You can reorganise for clarity and remove incoherent ideas. Basically, good writing emerges from multiple rounds of revision. So, finding time to revise and rewrite is a must. Take some time away from your draft before you begin reworking on it. You can take a few days or hours to distance yourself from your writing. When you revisit your draft after the brief break, read it like an editor, although revising is not editing.

Do remember that revising is not the same as editing. When you revise, you can even change the whole draft and start afresh. Though editing is a part of the revision process, it does not involve large scale changes to the draft. So, when you sit to work on a writing project, do ensure that you have set enough and more time for revisions.

Step 10: Integrating Feedback - How to collaborate?

Most people believe that writing is a personal project. While this may be true to some extent, good writing emerges from collaboration and feedback. Even

after the first round of revisions, you may still not know if your writing would work for a reader. To understand this, you could consider asking a friend or colleague to read your draft.

Constructive feedback can do wonders to your draft. It will improve the reading experience of your draft and make you confident about your writing. Here are a few steps that will help you to receive feedback:

- Find a trusted friend or peer who can give you constructive feedback. Ensure that they are kind and objective in their comments.
- Share the draft and a detailed note outlining the goals of your writing, with your friend. The note will help them understand the purpose of your writing and help them communicate effective feedback.
- Keep an open mind. Feedback can be a mixed bag of tricks. It is possible that your friend may not like some part of your writing. If they say so, be polite and ask them why they did not find it up to the mark. Knowing their reason can help you revise your draft.

Step 11:Polishing the Draft - How to Edit and Proofread?

Editing and proofreading are the final steps of the writing process. They make our writing effective and error-free. Though editing and proofreading are linked to each other, they are different in terms of their functions. Editing, for example, can be a part of the revising process. Since we are re-reading the draft, we may edit for clarity as we make revisions. proofreading, on the other hand, only engages with error correction.

The following steps can help you with your editing process:

- **Read your writing aloud**: When you read aloud, you are the reader of your writing. You give real-time feedback to your brain and that can help with identifying problems faster.
- **Find and fix common mistakes**: There are several common mistakes that we make when we write. These can include punctuation errors or spelling mistakes. If you have noticed some of them in your previous writing, you can check for them when you edit.
- **Check and remove repetitions**: Remove repetitive words, phrases, and ideas when you read. Instead, use synonyms.
- **Clarity:** Look out for wordy, clichéd and empty sentences. See if you can combine sentences for clarity.
- **Use active voice**: Sentences like ‘The new software can be mastered easily in a couple of days’ are awkward as compared to ‘You can easily master the new software in a couple of days.’ To avoid this, always give importance to the subject.
- **Ensure uniformity in the use of tenses**: Check if you have switched tenses or used the wrong tense.

- **Check for subject-verb agreement errors**: See if there are any errors in pronoun usage.

The following steps can help you with your proofreading process:

- Read one sentence at a time. Look closely from the beginning to the end. When reading the sentence, look out for missing words, spelling mistakes and punctuation errors. Reading sentences one by one can help you spot errors faster since you are reading them in isolation.
- Read the paper aloud. When you read out, you will hear yourself speak and spot errors faster. You can also hear how your sentences sound to a listener/reader and make changes based on that.
- Consider proofreading in a different order other than top to bottom. If you read the paper from bottom to top or in parts, you may catch typos and other spelling mistakes.
- Common punctuation errors such as use of commas and apostrophes can also be rectified during proofreading.
- Finally, to ensure that there are no mistakes, you can also consider sharing your writing with a friend and asking them to proofread. Since they are unfamiliar with the text, they can easily spot errors when they read.

Activity 7

Spot the Mistakes: Read the text given below. There are 12 verbs that are wrong. Rewrite the passage with the correct form of the verb in the space provided.

Some jobs is very demanding but nevertheless, someone have to do them. Recently, I saw an advertisement in the newspaper where ABC Company were looking for a Chocolate Purchase Manager. The Company were offering to pay ₹30,000 per year for the right candidate. The nature of the job are also very interesting. The applicant are expected to travel to Africa to selects the right cocoa to be used in the making of chocolate. The company are expecting a lot of applications for the job. They is looking for someone who work hard, enjoy travelling and who love chocolate.

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9.5 SUMMARY

In this unit, we have learned the importance of writing as an important mode of communication. We looked at how writing helps us to organise our thoughts and helps us communicate effectively. At the workplace, good, clean, concise writing helps us in upward mobility in our careers. We also saw how writing helps us in creating meaningful texts of all types. Finally, it helps us to think and articulate our ideas and communicate them to the target audience. This unit also discussed the basic steps involved in the process of writing which is important in present times as written communication, be it informal or formal, has become an integral part of the workplace.

9.6 KEYWORDS

Written Communication: It is the process of transmitting messages through written words

Mind Maps: A visual tool to capture the ideas.

Feedback: Process of transmitting evaluative or corrective information about an action.

Editing: Process of selecting and preparing a written, visual or audible material to convey a message.

Proofreading: Process of identifying errors in the text.

9.7 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Discuss the need for written communication?

2) What are the characteristics of good written communication?

3) Explain different steps of the process of writing.

4) What is the role of feedback in written communication?

5) Why is written communication important for business organisations?

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UNIT 10 SHORT BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to;

- Understand the significance of business correspondence;
- Understand various types of business letters; and
- Develop the skills-set to write effective business letters.

Structure

10.1 Introduction

10.2 Concept of Business Correspondence

10.3 Purpose of Business Correspondence

10.4 Types of Business Correspondence

10.5 Foreign Words and Phrases

10.6 Business Letter

10.7 Types of Business Letters

10.8 Personalised Stand Letters

10.9 Memorandum

10.10 Email Writing

10.11 Summary

10.12 Keywords

10.13 Self-Assessment Questions

10.14 References and Further Readings

Appendices

Appendix A - Specimen of a Refusal Letter

Appendix B - Specimen of an Acceptance Letter (Invitation to join Professional/Civic Bodies)

Appendix C - Specimen of an Order Letter

Appendix D - Specimen of an Enquiry Letter

Appendix E - Specimen of a Collection Letter

Appendix F - Specimen layout of an Application Letter (Covering Letter)

Appendix G - Specimen of a Sales Letter

Appendix H - Specimen of a Personalized Stand Letter (Seasonal Greetings)

Appendix I - Specimen of a Personalized Stand Letter (Being promoted)

Appendix J - Specimen of a Personalized Stand Letter (Family Bereavement)

Appendix K - Specimen of a Personalized Letter of Complaints

Appendix L - Specimen of a Memorandum

Appendix M - Specimen layout of an Email

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Business correspondence plays a pivotal role as communication with all the stakeholders is very important. All the stakeholders connected with the business contribute at their respective levels.Timely, sequential and systematic communication with these stakeholders results in enhancing the productivity of the business and also helps in developing long lasting relationships. Every business unit has to be clear in defining its terms and conditions of operating their business and the same terms and conditions have to be communicated precisely to all the stakeholders concerned. It bridges the gap between all the parties involved in the business. Different types of correspondence are being used in business and they are drafted as per the situation. The business correspondence has to be clear, concise and accurate as every business correspondence reflects the image of the writer or the organisation which it represents. The business correspondence has to be free from any bias and must be written with a decent business tone without hurting the dignity of the reader. This unit discusses different types of business correspondence.

10.2 CONCEPT OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Business correspondence is the lifeline of every business. Correspondence whether it is verbal or written can have a huge impact on the bottom line profitability and productivity of any organisation. Proper drafted emails, structured approach in offline & online meetings, systematic webinars, well-defined inter and intradepartmental communication all play an important role in defining the success of an organisation. Proper business correspondence has taken a prominent place in today's business world, as the success and failure of an organisation are largely dependent on the quality of communication taking place.

Business correspondence includes both written and oral communication. Letters, emails, reports, memos are all formal and part of commercial and business activity; so are interviews, meetings, conferences, presentations, and negotiations. The challenge to improve business correspondence is omnipresent, as each and every employee in any organisation is involved with one or the other type of communication.

10.3 PURPOSE OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

In business communication, the way one writes any form of business letters makes a lot of difference. There are a number of letters of different forms being written in any organisation. Therefore, it becomes important to understand the purpose of business correspondence. The following points give an idea about the purpose of business correspondence:

1) **Maintaining proper relationships–** The purpose of business correspondence is governed by the fact that it facilitates effective and

proper communication which does not cost too much to the business as well. It consolidates the business by filling away all the vacuum and communication gaps in this case.

2) **Organisational goodwill-** An organisation's growth can increase due to systematic business correspondence. The way an organisation addresses a client, clients' queries, their feedback, complaints, and stakeholders' issues create the goodwill of any organisation slowly and gradually and enhances its credibility.

3) **Reduces employee turnover-** Organisations in which employees are satisfied and earnestly engaged and involved with their work have much lower turnover rates. In order to retain the workforce, the organisations have to ensure that relevant information should reach their employees pertaining to their job roles and responsibilities. On the flip side, too much irrelevant information often leads to disengagement, less productivity, feeling monotonous, which results in lower employee retention.

4) **Increases productivity of employees-** Today employees operate in a world where there is information overload. Identifying the right source of information, meticulously and scanning the right and appropriate information is very cumbersome and takes lots of employees' productive time. Moreover, an average employee spends 3 hours every day searching for information needed. On the other hand, if the intra-organisational correspondence is clear, this can help the employees have clarity and accuracy about their work requirements and roles.

5) **Improves customer satisfaction and retention-** Proper business correspondence can help any organisation with repetitive sales. It is said that it is easy to lose a customer, but twice as tough to bring an unsatisfied customer back to the organisation. Proper, clear, and transparent business correspondence can help in portraying the right image of the organisation in the eyes of its customer. Customers appreciate professional and timely correspondence, along with regular follow-ups thereby increasing the trust in the organisation which grows with the passage of time.

We know that there are different types of business correspondence. Let us now discuss these types in the following section.

10.4 TYPES OF BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

There are different types of business correspondence and the frequency of use of them varies from organisation to organisation. The correspondence types which are used in almost all organisations are mentioned below:

1) Internal Correspondence

Internal correspondence may be a written communication between departments, employees, micro-units, and various regional branches, zones, and branches of one organisation. The internal correspondence may be formal or informal. Usually, regular internal correspondence is less formal, like the

manager issuing some instructions to his/her team. Email is often the most common tool while sending internal correspondence.

Other internal correspondences include appraisal letters, letters of dismissal, letters of appreciation, formal requests, etc. Typically, such communication is usually printed on a piece of paper, which the sender authenticates and signs and the recipients receive it physically.

2) **External correspondence**

External correspondence may occur amongst two organisations or between one organisation and its customers. External correspondence is mainly made to, sponsors, government offices, vendors, prospective clients, suppliers, financial firms, accounting and law firms, creditors, donors, business affiliates etc.

3) **Sales correspondence**

Sales correspondence may consist of a purchase order, marketing letters, promotional offer letters, sales reports, new scheme letters, discount-offer letters, invoices, letters of order confirmation, collection letters. Every sales correspondence has to be meticulously drafted. Promotional offer letters need to be authentic, should not contain any hidden information and must not mislead the customers.

4) **Personalized correspondence**

This type of correspondence is customized and tailor-made. Suitable examples include appreciation notes, 'Thank-you' letters expressing gratitude, letters of condolence and sympathy, letters of congratulations and good wishes, letters of seasonal greetings.

Personal correspondence letters might not have an ardent formal tone of the conversation. They can be sent through email, but a physically drafted letter is appreciated as it has personal warmth and touch.

5) **Circulars**

Circulars refer to notices which are sent to many people in an organisation. They might be new announcements, new advancements, or new office policies having new instructions or even new office protocols. The circulars are focused to reach many readers and are usually kept in a generic tone as they cater to numerous people who receive them.

6) **Routine correspondence**

This type of correspondence is related to routine issues. Common types of routine correspondence include invitations, replies, letters of appointment, inquiries and acknowledgments.

These were the basic types of correspondence. Delving deeper let us now discuss the various types of business letters.

10.5 FOREIGN WORDS AND PHRASES

Words and phrases form an important part of any communication. In business correspondence also words and phrases play an important role. These words and phrases are mostly of Latin or French origin. They are being given here so that if you come across them, you do not face any difficulty in understanding their meaning.

1)	ad hoc	-	for a particular purpose
2)	ad valorem	-	according to value
3)	bonafide	-	genuine (e.g., only bona fide members will be allowed to attend the meeting.)
4)	de facto	-	actual, real
5)	en bloc	-	as a whole
6)	en masse	-	all together
7)	en route	-	on the way
8)	errata	-	list of errors
9)	ex officio	-	rank or position (by virtue of one's office)
10)	ex parte	-	one-sided
11)	fait accompli	-	an established fact
12)	impasse	-	deadlock
13)	in camera	-	in secret
14)	inter alia	-	among other things
15)	in Toto	-	wholly or entirely
16)	ipso facto	-	virtually
17)	laissez faire	-	free (the principle of non-interference)
18)	locus standi	-	the right to interfere
19)	malafide	-	in bad faith; treacherously
20)	modus operandi	-	way of doing a thing
21)	notabene	-	take notice (N.B.)
22)	nouveau riches	-	persons who have become lately rich
23)	par excellence	-	eminently
24)	per capita	-	per head
25)	per diem	-	per day
26)	prima facie	-	on the face of it
27)	pro-rata	-	in proportion to
28)	sine die	-	indefinitely
29)	status quo	-	the existing condition
30)	subjudice	-	under consideration of a judicial body

31)	ultra vires	-	beyond one's powers
32)	verbatim	-	word for word
33)	versus	-	against
34)	via media	-	a middle course
35)	vide	-	indicates reference to some passage or book, etc.
36)	vis-à-vis	-	in relation to something or someone

10.6 BUSINESS LETTER

The art of letter writing dates back to olden times, and in present times also letters are indeed an important source of communicating the messages. Business letters are usually written for persuading potential customers to buy some product, answering the queries, replying to customers' feedback, asking or giving quotations, collecting dues, and maintaining relationships with stakeholders. In order to write a good business letter, few requisites should always be kept in mind such as the knowledge of the language, proper punctuation, purpose, and intent of the letter, concise style of writing, and maintaining authenticity. The writer should be very clear about the procedures, policy, protocols, rules, and regulations of the organisation as letters not only represent the person who sends it but also represents the image and goodwill of the organisation. A properly drafted business letter can become an impactful mouthpiece of an organisation. For a business letter to be fresh, sprightly, and readable, there is no better way to begin than by a thorough 'house cleaning'. Begin by throwing out all surplus words. Read over every sentence of your letter and ask yourself: 'Is this word really necessary? Will the meaning change if I remove this word?' Remember! In a business letter, every word must earn its place and there is absolutely no place for parasite words in a crisp piece of writing. There are different types of business letters and they are used as per the requirement. Let us discuss some common forms of business letters.

10.7 TYPES OF BUSINESS LETTERS

As we have learnt that business letters should have clarity and should relay the right message. It is therefore important to learn how these letters are framed and for what purpose. We will discuss some common types of business letters which are used by almost all the organisations.

REFUSAL LETTER

If they are not to offend, letters of refusal must be both tactful and friendly. They should leave the recipient with the impression that the invitation was not only welcome but is turned down for a genuine reason. There are some do's and don'ts for a refusal letter. These are:

Do's while drafting a refusal letter

1) Express gratitude for the reader;
2) Use soft and mellow words;

3) Mention the authentic reasons for refusal;
4) Give importance to the sender's efforts;
5) Close the letter on a futuristic note.

Note: Refer to Appendix A for the "Specimen Of a Refusal Letter".

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Letters accepting an invitation to an organisation's annual banquet, to lunch or dinner at someone's place, or to any other event requiring prior preparation, should be sent within two days of receiving the invitation.

While conveying pleasure at being invited and anticipation of the event, their degree of formality or informality readers should take their cue from the invitation itself. Obviously, a chatty note inviting you to lunch at a friend's club will be answered in an informal way, while an invitation to the Organisation's Annual banquet will require a more formal reply.

It is a good plan to reiterate the time, place, and date of the meeting just to make sure there will be no misunderstanding.

Note: Refer to Appendix B for the "Specimen of an invitation to join professional or civic Body"

ORDER LETTER

Letters related to the ordering of goods and services are most prominent to an organisation's business. Orders are usually routine letters, and their effectiveness totally depends on the accuracy of the details they hold. Replies to orders are treated as opportunities to build up goodwill and relationships with new customers, uncertain customers, regained customers as well as long-standing loyal customers.

The Order letter must have the following details:

1) They should be clear and transparent as there should be no hidden cost;
2) All the financial details must be clearly mentioned;
3) The exact quantities of goods ordered should be accurate;
4) Order letter should be sent on time;
5) Order letter should be concise;
6) They are an important tool for establishing long-term relationships.

Note: Refer to Appendix C for "Specimen of an Order Letter"

ENQUIRY LETTER

The most common letters in business are buyers' enquiries about goods and services. Today, a good deal of information about goods and prices is conveyed by telephone, mobile, social media platforms and emails; but everyone may not have these facilities and prefer to use letters so that they have a document and record for reference. In most of the cases, the formal order letter is used for documentation purposes.

Note: Refer to Appendix D for "Specimen of an Enquiry letter".

COLLECTION LETTER

Usually, collection letters are written to customers who have bought things, availed of services on credit and their bills are still unpaid or outstanding. There are some debtors who might pay the amount immediately while receiving a text message, letter or email but others may not. The collection letters have to be mild in tone as the tone of the overall communication should not hurt the customers' sentiments and the customers are to be retained at the same time.

Note: Refer to Appendix E for "Specimen layout of a Collection Letter".

APPLICATION LETTER

A letter of application, also known as a cover letter is a document along with candidates resume which provides additional information about his/her skill-sets, expertise, and relevant work experience.

A letter of application holds detailed information mentioning the reasons as to why a candidate is qualified for the profile s/he has applied for. A well-drafted application letter explains the reasons for your interest in the organisation where you have applied.

A good application letter should reveal to the employer the position/job profile the candidate has applied for, why the employer should select him/her as a potential candidate etc.

Every detail of the covering letter needs careful attention; parts of the layout must be arranged neatly and framed accurately; names, designations, addresses, dates, and so on, must be absolutely correct. Even a small error can send a wrong message to the prospective employer about the applicant's carelessness. An employer is interested in the applicant's personal qualities like diligence, inquisitiveness, teamwork, adaptability, and motivation to achieve. The candidate must present to the employer why s/he fits in the organisation.

If a job is attractive, there will be many applicants with similar qualifications competing to make the first impression. An impressive covering letter with an individual style will always be preferred and has a better chance than a routine letter which is no different from a hundred others that state the same required qualifications. A successful covering letter must position a personality that an employer would like to meet.

It is important that if you are a prospective candidate and applying for a position you should follow the following:

- use your own style;
- be concise;
- letter should not be of more than one page;
- use simple language without jargons and complex sentences.

Note: Refer to Appendix F for "Specimen Layout of an Application Letter (Covering Letter)".

SALES PROMOTION LETTER

Sales letters are commonly used for giving information about products/services and persuading prospective customers to buy the products. The sales letter should always be customized to suit the needs and interests of selected groups or individual buyers. The sales letter is the most highly individualized form of advertising and publicity. It addresses an individual or a group personally and attempts to change them into an interested, potential buyer. It is somewhat like a written sales presentation and follows the persuasion steps towards convincing.

The sales letter closely follows the following four stages of the selling process:

a) Attract attention

b) Create interest and desire

c) Win confidence

d) Motivation and action

a) Attracting the attention

There are many ways of attracting attention. The opening sentence must arouse curiosity and encourage the reader to read further.

You can use the following lines to grab the attention

a) Proverbs and quotations from well-known writers are interesting for their pointed style which can focus attention at once. For example."No pain, no gain" is an old proverb. But today's technology has taken the pain out of most things (to sell any gadget).

   You cannot buy everything in the world, but you can buy the best of some things.

b) A conditional sentence can be exciting provided the suggested condition is a possibility within the reach of the reader. A conditional phrase can be used to begin a statement, or a question, or a command. For example, if you have intelligent children, they will ask questions that adults never dream of.

c) Questions have the power to arouse thoughts; they set the mind thinking to find an answer like Would you like to take your family for a grand vacation this summer, wouldn't you?

b) Creating interest and desire

You need an understanding of human desires and feelings, good knowledge of the product, and a clear mental picture of the prospective customer in order to develop an effective chain of interest, desire, confidence, and willingness

to buy. There are two things that really stimulate people; the hope of gain and the fear of loss, the fear of loss is the stronger of the two, hope of gain and fear of loss are basic to common human desires. Whatever product/service you wish to sell; you have to position it so that its benefits satisfy one or more of the following universal desires.

- To be wealthy
- To look good
- To be healthy
- To be popular
- To have security

c) Win confidence and creating conviction

While you present your product and try to make readers accept what you say, they go through different emotions. The initial interest and desire for a product/service give place to strong doubts and uncertainty of different kinds and on different accounts.

The first doubt may be aimed outward at the seller and /or at the product. The reader may think of such questions like -Is the seller to be believed? Does the organisation support its product and stand by the buyers? Is the product really good? Durable?Satisfactory?Trouble-free? What about the after-sales service? What If I find the product unsatisfactory? etc.

The reader is likely to think, "Yes, s/he thinks s/he can fix my problem. They all say that!". Therefore, it is important that you present your credentials, that is, the reason why you can be trusted and the proof that your claims are true. Evidence or proof of worth can be of two types: (1) Facts and (2) Opinions.

Facts include:

- Figure of sales
- Medals, prizes, and certifications
- Mention accreditation by certifying bodies such as ISO 9000 certifications etc.
- Samples, demonstrations, and trial offers

Opinions of satisfied users add social proof. There may still be doubts in the readers' minds, even though they may secretly hope that the stated benefits are true. To build up credibility, present testimonials from satisfied customers. Letters of appreciation received from satisfied users are the best testimonials. You may get such letters from customers to whom you send after-sales letters.

d) Inducing action

The most important function of the sales letter is to get action from the reader. The entire structure of the letter should be designed in such a way that the reader takes the step towards the product. At times an extra incentive is needed to make people take action. When people think that there is a limited

supply of something that they want, they usually rush to get some of it. You can create a sense of shortage by limiting the offer in some way, such as by stating that the quantity is in limited supply, or by making your offer valid for only a limited time. For example, "This offer is valid only until (state the last date) after which the product or service will return to its original price".

Note: Refer to Appendix G for "Specimen of a Sales Letter"

Activity 1

a) You are an entrepreneur who has started his/her business in the industrial paints segment. Identify those companies which manufacture industrial paints.

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b) Identify the types of clients to whom these industrial paints are supplied.

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c) Draft an effective sales letter to those companies who are in regular need of the industrial paints. Ensure that your sales letter should cover important details like types of industrial paints, USP of your organisation, pricing details and element of persuasion.

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10.8 PERSONALISED STAND LETTERS

It is true that in business, relations are maintained formally and professionally. However, there are certain situations where customized tailor-made correspondence has to be done with all the stakeholders to maintain long-term relations. Personalized stand letters can include letters of condolence and sympathy, thank you letters, congratulations and good wishes

letters, letters of season's greetings, letters of welcome etc. The specimens of different types of application letters are given in the appendices part.

Note: Refer to Appendix H for "Specimen letters of Seasonal Greetings" (Personalised Stand Letters)

Note: Refer to Appendix I for "Specimen letters of Being Promoted" (Personalised Stand Letters)

Note: Refer to Appendix J for "Specimen letters of Family Bereavement" (Personalised Stand Letters)

Personalised Letters of Complaints

In any business, there will be some mistakes and mishaps; you may not get the goods and services as you had expected and ordered. If things go wrong with your order, you have to inform the supplier about the problem and see that the faults are corrected and adjustments are made.

Note: Refer to Appendix K for "Specimen of Personalised Letter of Complaints".

10.9 MEMORANDUM

A memorandum (memo) signifies a "reminder" or a note as well. It is generally used for communication within an organisation only. It may contain any prime announcement, policies or new procedures or rules to be adopted within an organisation. Furthermore, it is typically written as common communication within an organisation. It can be used to update a team on activities, the latest developments for a given project, or to inform a selected cluster inside an organisation of a happening, action, or observance. A memo's purpose is typically to inform; however, it sometimes includes a part of persuasion or a decision to action. Every organisation has informal and formal communication channels and networks. The unofficial, informal communication network inside an organisation is typically known as the grapevine, and it is typically characterized by rumour, gossip, and insinuation. In a grapevine, one person might hear some information and go around the organisation passing the information to other people. If an organisation needs workers in action, they will additionally issue a note. While memos do not usually embrace a decision to action that desires personal deployment, they typically represent the business or organisation's interests.

The sole objective of using a business memo is to convey a message, which must be concise and efficient. The formatting of the memo should frame the document as easy to read and navigate and as comprehensible as possible.

The unique formatting details, such as colours and font, vary from organisation to organisation and usually depend upon the guidelines framed by the management of the organisation. Memos should clarify the following information in the header, normally at the top of the document.

- **Date:** mention the date on which the memo is sent to its targeted audience;
- **To**: The name and/or designation of the individual(s) or team(s) to whom the memo is primarily written for;
- **Cc** (Optional): The name or title of anyone else who will receive a copy, if applicable;
- **From**: Name of the issuer of memo accompanied by the handwritten initials and possibly the job title;
- **Subject**: A phrase that sums up the memo's content effectively.

Note: Refer to Appendix L for "Specimen layout of Memorandum"

Activity 2

You are a Human Resource Manager in an IT Firm. You have been frequently receiving resignation letters from all the departments of the organisation. You have found that employees are leaving the organisation without any prior notice. Organize a meeting with all the departmental heads and explore the reasons for high attrition rates in the organisation. Draft a memo in this context to all the employees of the organisation and apprise them with new details of exit policy.

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10.10 EMAIL WRITING

A well-drafted email can make the difference between a successful organisation or an unsuccessful one. A properly drafted email can turn a prospective customer into a potential client.

Email communication can vary depending on various factors including the nature of industry, organisation, the profile it operates in. The language of an email differs when we are addressing a superior or a peer or if we are writing to one or several recipients or if we are writing across countries, cultures and organisations as well.

The features of a well drafted email writing are mentioned below.

1) Include a comprehensible subject line

- The subject line should be composed just like a headline of a newspaper. The newspaper's headlines are designed to attract readers to read the articles, one should write subject lines in such a way that you arouse the recipient's curiosity and s/he will be very inclined to read the mail rather than resisting it.

- Do add a descriptive prefix before the actual subject line, such as in the: “Need response urgently:”, or use “FYI” (for your information) and “FYA” (for your action).

2) Always use an appropriate Salutation

Salutations are many times debated. Few argue that you should always use a formal greeting. This solely depends on the recipient and the rapport you have with them. If you are writing to a close colleague or your team, an informal ‘Hi’ will likely be an apt salutation.

If the emails have been sent to somebody in the past and if there is a chain of trail mails going on, then it is fine to write an email without any formal greeting again and again. A formal salutation or introduction must be added with casual acquaintances.

1) **Short-hands/forms should be used with only well-known acquaintances**

Everyone wishes to save time in the organisations. People prefer shortcuts and short-hands. Writing in short-hands to an internal team of the organisation, or to one’s own team, can still be accepted. On the other hand, handwriting in shorthand to clients may lead to casualness. If you are writing an email to someone with whom you have professional relations, then short forms should be avoided.

2) **Be aware of using humour or colloquialism across different cultures**

Cross-culture emails or emails to different groups have to be written with proper knowledge and awareness. One should be aware that funny sayings or colloquial words may be completely misunderstood by your business colleagues in overseas offices. Wrong messages degrade the image of the organisation and employees as well.

3) **Consider the purpose of your email**

Always state the core purpose of your email. Open-ended emails can be confusing. Be very clear about what you expect from your emails. Are you expecting immediate action or the mail is just for mere information? The purpose and course of action must be clearly mentioned.

4) **Think before you smile**

Emojis have crept into formal and informal communication nowadays. With the increase of email and text communication, it is impossible to see facial expressions, so people add smiley faces to pass their messages impressively to others. It depends on the norm in your organisation and sector, but be mindful of when and to whom you are sending emojis.

5) **Do not hit reply all or CC for everyone**

One should be very clear and accurate about the recipients of the email. Target your emails to only those people with whom the emails are related. Unnecessary emails being sent to unconcerned people create confusion and

also kill the productive time of other people. At the same time, unnecessary emails are also considered highly unprofessional.

6) **Reply in a timely fashion**

A timely reply to an email usually within 24 hours shows your concern and consideration. This especially holds very true when you have been invited to attend any meeting, or where you need to reply to any deadlines regarding a project or any other situation which needs to be addressed timely.

7) **Always spell check**

Remember! Your words are your reflection. In professional parlance, having spelling mistakes ruins one's image as well as the image of the organisation where one works. Sending emails with spelling mistakes and grammatical errors can be disgusting for colleagues. They could infer that you are too languid to use the spell check before you click send. Take the time to re-read your emails, make sure your emails are sensible enough before you hit the send button.

8) **It is all about context**

At the end, the crux is the context. Emails not only carry the image of an individual who writes it, but also the image of the organisation as a whole. To whom the email is being targeted? How acquainted are you with the recipient of the email? Do you know the recipient is close to, who are your employees writing? How well do they know the recipient? Do they know them quite well or simply virtually? How will the email be comprehended? What is the goal of the email? The HR team can play a pivotal role here by making every employee well acquainted with the tone of the organisation. In this case, certain training programs can be conducted.

Note: Refer to Appendix M for "Specimen Layout of an Email"

10.11 SUMMARY

Business correspondence plays a very important role and is very important and crucial for every organisation for maintaining long-term relations with all its stakeholders. Proper and timely business correspondences do impact the image of the organisation and vice-versa. Business correspondence should always be clear, concise, and accurate so that the message is sent exactly the way it has been planned and conceived. There are various types of business correspondence that are used based on different situations. We learnt different types of business letters like Order letter, Refusal letter, Enquiry letter, Quotation letter, Acceptance letter, letter for different kinds of situations, Personalized stand letters, enquiries, customers' complaints, collection letters – Sales promotion letters, Application letters, and memos. These letters are common to almost all the business organisations. While writing the letters it is important to customize them as per the needs, likes, and dislikes of the reader as well. In a nutshell, business correspondence should be courteous, concise and complete.

10.12 KEYWORDS

Internal Correspondence: Internal correspondence may be a formal or informal written communication between departments, employees, micro-units, and various regional branches, zones, and branches of one organisation.

External Correspondence: External correspondence may occur amongst two organisations or between one organisation and its customers.

Sales Correspondence: Sales correspondence may consist of a purchase order, marketing letters, promotional offer letters, sales reports, new scheme letters, discount-offer letters, invoices, letters of order confirmation, collection letters.

Order letter: Orders are usually routine letters, and their effectiveness totally depends on the accuracy of the details they hold.

Memorandum: A memorandum (memo) signifies a "reminder" or a note as well. It is generally used for communication within an organisation only.

10.13 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) As an agent for a chain of hotels at hill stations and holiday resorts, draft a sales letter to be sent to high-income group persons, offering special off-season packages.

2) Wanted young, dynamic, and result-oriented marketing personnel (Boys and Girls) for a reputed computer software organisation. Must be a graduate with good communication skills. Work experience will be preferred. Qualified candidates will get attractive compensation plus a traveling allowance. Send applications and CV along with a passport size photograph before 25th Sept 2021. To Scifi Consultants, 8/C, High Tower, Nariman Point, Mumbai-400008. Draft a covering letter for applying for the vacancy.

3) Tropical Dry fruits Organisation, fruits exporting agents, placed an order with Sun power products, for 5000 kg of Almonds to be sent to a customer in China. On receiving the consignment, they find that some boxes of almonds are damaged. Draft the complaint letter to the supplier.

4) A business associate has invited you to attend his organisation's dinner meeting, at which a well-known Tax consultant will be speaking. Write a reply, regretting your inability to attend.

5) You have been invited to speak at a meeting of the Mumbai management association's quarterly meeting, on the management of non-profit organisations. Draft a reply accepting the invitation.

6) As a team leader in Pinnacle industry, an IT firm, you caught one of your team members tempering with crucial data of the organisation. Write an email to the HR manager reporting this incident and asking what further course of action should be taken in this case?

10.14 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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Appendix A: Specimen of a Refusal Letter

Mr A Banerjee
XX, Andheri East
Mumbai-400007
02 October 2021

Ms. M. Agrawal
YY/1, Vile Parle,
Mumbai-400004

Dear Ms. Agarwal,

Thank you for your letter giving me details of the Annual Advertising Association conference in Mumbai next month.

Obviously, it would have been both a duty and a pleasure for me to attend, but it looks like I will be unable to accept your kind invitation this time because of an important personal engagement in Delhi.

Let me assure you that nothing short of an extremely important commitment would keep me away from the conference. It really is most unfortunate that my Delhi trip coincides with the ad conference, but I am afraid that there is absolutely nothing I can do about it.

Do please, therefore, excuse me this time. The programme sounds interesting indeed, and I shall look forward to hearing all about it from my more fortunate colleagues. Please accept my very best wishes for its success.

Sincerely,

A. Banerjee

Appendix B: Specimen of an invitation to join professional or civic bodies

P Benjamin

XX, Andheri East,

Mumbai-400007

02 October 2021

Ms. M. Mehta

YY/1, Vile Parle,

Mumbai-400004

Dear Ms. Mehta,

I greatly appreciate your cordial invitation to become a member of the Writers' Association, Bangalore, and gladly accept the same.

Realizing how many writers of distinction from every corner of the globe are its members, I am aware of the honour extended to me and am eager to be a part of the association.

Yours sincerely,

P Benjamin

Appendix C: Specimen of an Order Letter

P. Narsimhan

Z Adhesives limited,
Scheme No.XXX, Industrial Estate
Bangalore-560005
02 October 2021

Mr.P.C Patel

P R Industries limited
YYY,Apex line Business Park
Ahmedabad-380004

Dear Mr. Patel,

Samples accepted and order Placement

We have tested your samples of adhesive paste and found that Sample No.212BH is suitable for our requirements. We are glad to place an order for 200 large tins of this paste. Please deliver the tins to our factory outlet in Bangalore. Our cheque for Rs 50000/- as advance payment and our GST declaration form is enclosed.

The material supplied must be of the same quality as of sample, we reserve the right to return the material if it does not match with our expectations or the material is of some other quality

Yours sincerely,

P. Narasimhan

Appendix D: Specimen of an Enquiry letter

P.Nandwal

Scheme No.XXX, Sky Luxuria
Ahmedabad-380007
02 October 2021

Mr. D. Sethi

Oriental Tiles limited
YY/7, Alpha Industrial area.
Ahmedabad-380004

Dear Mr.Sethi.

Enquiry about colour paints

During the recent trade fair in Ahmedabad, I saw some samples of your new color paint collection. I would like to make use of them for the interiors I am designing for a new hotel. Please give me the following information:

1) In what sizes, color combinations can you supply the paints?
2) Are the colours likely to be affected by rising temperatures?
3) Are there any special precautions we should keep in mind while using the paints?

I shall be very grateful if you could send me the answers to my concerns mentioned above by Saturday the 16th, October 2021.

Yours sincerely,

P. Nandwal

Appendix E: Specimen of a Collection Letter

A.Tiwari

M Car services Limited
Plot No.XX, Palasiya
Indore-452009
02 October 2021

Mr. A. Sinha

YYD/H schemen74-c
Indore-452010

Dear Ms.Sinha,

This is a quick reminder to let you know that your amount with us is past due. The amount of Rs.3800/- for services rendered on September 9, 2021, was due as per invoice number INV/2334/G. Please pay the amount by October 31, 2020, to avoid late payment penalties.

If you have already sent payment for this invoice, please disregard this letter and accept our thanks for the payment. We appreciate doing business with you and look forward to doing so in the future.

Sincerely,

A.Tiwari

Appendix F:Specimen Layout of an Application Letter (Covering Letter)

Your address

City and pin code

State

Date

Name/Title

Division /Organisation

Address

City and Pin code

State

Salutation

In the first paragraph, mention the specific position you are applying for. How did you learn about the organisation as well ?

Draw attention to anything in your track record that makes you a suitable, apt candidate for the position. Elaborate on specific accomplishments given in your CV. Do indicate how your relevant work experience and education, training is congruent to the position you are applying for. One must also indicate one's motivation for a career in the specific industry/organisation you are applying for.

Say what you will do next; for example, make a telephone call to make sure that the employer is interested in setting up an interview. Or, if you prefer to be conventional, say that you will show samples of your work/answer questions at an interview.

Complimentary close

Signature

(Your name typed/neatly written)

Appendix G: Specimen of a Sales Letter

A. Krishna,

XX, Savvy Street,
Mumbai-4000005
02 October 2021

Ms. M Sinha

XX F/H scheme No 100
Indore-452010

Dear Ms.Sinha,

Don’t lose this letter, or you will lose your free gift!

At the Golden Bow store we are having our Annual Festival Sale, and we want you to be there for outstanding savings on everything in the store and a free gift everyone will love.

Beginning 5th October 2021 and ending 31st October 2021, Golden Bow store will have huge discounts, on items like:

50 % off on all Ready-made garments or 45% off on all footwear or 30% off on all Glassware. And not only will you save, but if you bring this letter during the Annual Festival Sale, we will also give you a travel Set of L Beauty products, absolutely free.

Mark your calendar now for the annual Festival sale starting 5th October 2021. So do join us and don’t forget to bring this letter, because our supplies of Travel sets of L Beauty Products are limited.

Sincerely,

A. Krishna

Golden Bow store

Appendix H: Specimen Letter of Season's Greetings

P. Nandwal

Scheme No.XX, Sky Luxuria
Ahmedabad-380007
22December 2021

Mr. G Fernandes

A IT Organisation
YY/7, Apex Industrial Area
Ahmedabad-380004

Dear Mr.Fernandes,

I am writing to you quite simply to wish you and your family a Merry Christmas and a happy and Prosperous New Year.

We frequently have occasions to write to our customers during the course of the year and our letters are usually concerned with a sale, an account, or some specific business matter between us. At this time of the year, however, we are writing just to thank our customers for the business they have given us and to wish them a happy holiday season

All my buyers and their staff join me in sending you this greeting.

Sincerely yours.

P.Nandwal

Appendix I: Specimen letter on Being Promoted

P. Mathew

Scheme No.XXX, Sky Matters Area
Ahmedabad-380007
02 October 2021

Mr. S. Mehta

PS Sales Corporation
YY, Industrial Estate
Ahmedabad-380004

Dear Mr Mehta,

I have just learned about your promotion to sales manager in place of Mr.Agnihotri who has been transferred, and would like to congratulate you most sincerely.

No one has worked harder than you over the past several years and I, for one, am delighted to see your efforts rewarded.

Unquestionably, under your enthusiastic leadership, your sales team will rise to still greater heights and achieve even more outstanding sales records.

Sincerely,

P.Mathew

Appendix J: Specimen Letter on Family Bereavement

P.Srinivasan

Scheme No.XXX, Sky Matters Area
Ahmedabad-380007
02 October 2021

Mr. R. Malhotra

RM Motors Corporation
Zenith Industrial Estate
Ahmedabad-380004

Dear Mr. Raman,

It came as a great shock to all of us at H Motors to hear the sudden tragic demise of your brother.

His Loss is a great one indeed, to you personally, to RM Motors, and H Motors, and to the community in general. All of us remember very vividly his tireless efforts to put RM Motors on the industrial map and the unstinting generosity with which he worked, not merely for himself and his organisation, but for the business community as a whole.

His work lives on and I am sure that his memory will remain for many years to come. You have our deepest sympathy for this premature loss.

Yours faithfully,

P.Srinivasan

Appendix K: Specimen of Personalized letter of Complaints

P. Naidu

Scheme No.XXX, Sky Matters Area
Ahmedabad-380007
02 October 2021

Mr. P. Parikh

IP Paints Organisation
Flex Industrial Estate.
Ahmedabad-380004

Dear Mr. Parikh,

We had placed an order with you on 8th September 2021 for 50 oil paints to be delivered by the 20th of September. Unfortunately, we have not yet received them. As we do not have any information from you about the delay, perhaps something has gone wrong somewhere.

Will you please find out the causes of the delay and let us know when we may expect delivery?

Yours sincerely

P. Naidu

Appendix L: Specimen of Memorandum

DATE: November 21, 2021

TO: All employees

FROM: Mr.Johnson, VP, Marketing Division

SUBJECT: Shifting of working place

I am writing to inform you that, over the next few days, the working area of Block One will be under construction as it is being re-modelled. As our organisation is growing, we feel it necessary to provide a better and spacious work ambience to our teammates.

Till 30th November 2021, the workforce of Block I would be temporarily shifted to Block II and after that, they can resume working in Block I.

All the seating arrangements for the workforce of Block I has been planned, and the seating plan has been displayed on the notice board.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix M: Specimen layout of an Email

Your professional email address	From: tpp989@gmail.com
Recipient's email address	To: too.skills@gmail.com
Subject line	Subject: (mention the subject line)
Greeting Phrase	Dear/Ms./Mr
Opening Line	(opening lines as per the mail)
Body paragraphs	(essence of the email)

(The length of the body paragraph is very subjective. It may vary from one line to many lines as per the gravity of the email)

Closing line	(mention the closing lines of your email)

Sign-off

Signature (Full name, Job Title, Organisation Name, contact details)

UNIT 11 LONG BUSINESS CORRESPONDENCE

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand how to draft business reports;
- Understand how to draft effective business proposals;
- Differentiate between a business report and a business proposal.

Structure

11.1 Introduction

11.2 Concept of a report

11.3 Types of Business Reports

11.4 Characteristics of a good report

11.5 Preparing the report

11.6 Organisation of a report

11.7 Components of Letter-text combination form of reports

11.8 Research Report

11.9 Technical Reports

11.10 Business proposal

11.11 Components of a business proposal

11.12 Persuasive proposal

11.13 Difference between business report & business proposal

11.14 Summary

11.15 Keywords

11.16 Self-Assessment Questions

11.17 References and further readings

11.1 INTRODUCTION

Every business operates in dynamic market conditions and the market forces are very versatile and these things impact the functioning of the business.This is the reason why every organisation frequently takes an effort to understand the market forces. At the same time, every organisation is affected by internal forces like less productivity of the employees or high attrition rates. All these forces have to be analyzed and then they have to be effectively presented in the form of reports. The business reports address all the internal and external causes which the business may be facing. The reports have specific formats and specific styles of presentation so that it is easy for all the readers to comprehend. The business reports are very substantial as they do impact the decision making of the organisations. Every organisation needs to expand its

business and the information about new products and services have to be communicated to all the customers and business proposals have become important tools of connection with the customers. All the nuances of business reports and business proposals have been covered in this unit.

11.2 CONCEPT OF A REPORT

Report is a formal document which scientifically describes any new phenomenon, new observation and insights and presents them in a logical manner in order to deduce important information out of it.

Different types of reports are prepared all over the year in every organisation. The frequency of reports may differ as per the nature and needs and systems of an organisation. Some reports may be prepared daily, some reports may be presented weekly or even once in a month, twice in a year etc. For example, a territory sales officer has to prepare a monthly sales target report and send it to his/her regional sales manager mentioning the sales volume of each and every product of his/her organisation in his/her territory or region. Thus, s/he also mentions the sales of the products which could achieve the target and also the product which could not achieve the target with reasons as well.

A publication firm, interested in introducing into the market a new series of books, can ask for a report on the latest preferences about the readers. The Board of Directors of the firm would definitely like to get a report on the lower productivity of an organisation and the future plans and vision.

Importance of reports

Decisions cannot be taken randomly in any organisation. Every decision has small term and long term consequences and involves cost. Thus reports play a crucial role in orienting the decision making in an organisation. The findings of the report create a logical base so that the right decisions can be taken at the right time. The decisions can be taken at an area level, state level or at country level and even at the international level as the reports act as substantial benchmarks in the decision-making process.

11.3 TYPES OF BUSINESS REPORTS

On the basis of legal formalities and official protocols which have to be adhered to, we can classify reports into two types.

1) Informal reports
2) Formal reports

1) Informal reports- An informal report may not be specifically prepared as per the rules and permanent obligations and protocols of the organisation. These reports do not have a fixed format and these reports are usually shorter in length as compared to formal reports. Trip reports, email, conference reports, memos are usually some examples of these reports.

2) **Formal reports-** A report that is prepared as per the set protocols, formats and as per the rules and regulations of the organisation are generally the formal reports.Formal reports can be statutory or non-statutory. A report prepared and presented as per the rules and regulations as per the requirement of any law comes under the purview of statutory report. The Executive Director's report at the annual general meeting, annual return reports, and auditor's report are some of the examples of statutory reports. Non-Statutory reports are prepared to assist the top management of the organisation and facilitate them in the decision-making process but these reports do not fall under any law. For example, report of any committee to the top management, report of any individual executive, officer, manager to the organisation etc.

On the basis of the frequency of the issue, a report can be periodic or special.

- **Periodic or Routine reports** are drafted as per specific frequencies of time. They may be drafted hourly, daily, weekly, monthly or once in a year.For example, an HR manager may send a monthly report to the management about the job attrition rate of the organisation. S/he will report the new recruits as well as those employees who have left the organisation mentioning the reasons. S/he will also assess the attrition rate whether it is decreasing or increasing.

- **Special reports** are drafted on special requests or needs of the organisation. They target very specific and focused areas, for example, the decline in the sales of X dolls in Japan. The report investigated the reasons behind the drop in the sales. Some reasons like the physical attributes of the doll did not match with Japanese women per se. X dolls portray physical attributes more of American girls like tall height, sharp features and broad eyes. Japanese girls did not identify with the structure of the doll as their physical attributes are different from those of American girls. As per the facts revealed by the report, the physical attributes of the doll were modified resembling that of Japanese girls. The modified doll was then re-launched in the Japanese market.

11.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD REPORT

Each report should have some features which make it a good or bad report. The characteristics are listed and explained below:

1) **Precision-** Precision means to be laser focused and only present those facts in the report which are relevant. This means the writer has to be very clear about the purpose of the report. The findings in the report should pinpoint the exact issue or the purpose of the report. Precision provides a type of cohesiveness to the report.

2) **Accuracy of facts-** The reliability of the report lies in its accuracy. Any fake information can ruin the decision-making process of the organisation. Genuine, authentic reports are vital as many a time financial decisions are also based upon the findings of the reports.

3) **Relevance-** During the course of report preparation, the researcher comes across information which may not be relevant as per the subject of the report. Some writers are very tempted to mention all the report findings, even the irrelevant ones, as they feel that it would make a detailed report. Mentioning irrelevant findings confuse the readers and also result in loss of their precious time. The report must include relevant and useful matters only.

4) **Reader-orientation-** The report should be made in alignment with the taste, preferences of the readers. The purpose of the report will be incomplete if the readers are not able to connect to the report.

5) **Objectivity of Recommendations-** Prejudiced thought process, biased approach and preoccupied thoughts will tarnish the sanctity of the report. The recommendations should be free from all these things and should maintain an unbiased tone.

6) **Simple and comprehensible language-** Clarity, simplicity, and readability are key characteristics of a report. It is a kind of scientific document which is pragmatic in nature.

7) **Clarity-** Ambiguous reports are of no use. The tone of the report must be clear and comprehensible. The reports should not have long paragraphs but should have well-articulated short paragraphs with titles which will make the report more comprehensible to the readers.

8) **Brevity-** A report should be brief and crisp but it should not compromise in its expression. If the report is addressing any in-depth analysis of something then the proper expression has to be respected. One must always do an analysis of the content which can be included or removed from the report. Brevity has to be respected for effective reporting.

9) **Grammatical accuracy-** Grammatical competence is one of the basic requisites of a good report. Grammatical errors not only degrade the image of the writer but also degrade the image of the organisation. A complete check-up on the sentence composition, proper use of articles, punctuations should be there.

We can say that a good report should be:

- precise and brief
- accurate (factually and grammatically)
- relevant
- reader-oriented
- objective
- clear and unambiguous

11.5 PREPARING THE REPORT

Let us now explore the logical flow in which the report preparation should be approached. The methodical way while preparing the report saves time and

efforts and focuses the attention of the writer in the right way. The following steps can be beneficial while preparing a report:

1) Identify the sources of information;
2) Take notes;
3) Meticulous analysis of the data;
4) Prepare an outline; and
5) Draft the report.

1) Identifying the sources of information- Content is distributed in journals, magazines, reports and in many other sources. Due to the scarcity of time the researcher cannot go through all the sources of information. S/he has to apply his/her mind and filter out the irrelevant sources of information. S/he has to pick those sources that can give accurate, speedy and relevant information. For example, if an organisation is frequently receiving complaints about its poor services from the customers, the ideal way to collect the data here could be identifying those customers and having face-to-face conversations or interviews with them. On the other hand, if the need of the report is to study the audience at a large scale then the source of collecting the data has to be different. For example, if a bank needs to study the emotional quotient of all of its employees in a country like India, then in this case questionnaire will be a good source of collecting the information. The questionnaire will be thus distributed to few employees (as per the sample size) to different branches of banks located in North, South or Eastern or western India so as to gather maximum information.

2) Taking notes- In the course of report making, the writer has to keep on taking notes so that any type of vital information should not be missed. Taking notes actually helps the writer to visualize which type of content is relevant or which type of content has to be rejected. Taking notes also helps in giving a methodical approach to report writing. In addition to it, proper details are not missed as this may be very important for decision making in the future.

3) Analyzing the Data- This is a crucial part of the report writing process. Right tools of analysis have to be used. Today with the help of various statistical tools the data can be logically analyzed but the writer of the report should have the awareness and understanding to choose the right tools for analysis and interpret it correctly.

4) Making an outline- Once the blueprint of the report has taken shape in the writer's mind, the writer can systematically infer the flow and tone in which the report work has to be drafted. S/he can logically deduce the priority of the information to be presented first or last,the flow of the parts-subparts of the report etc.

5) Writing the report- The rough draft should be revised and polished by and again. The writer should also be careful that the language of the report is simple, free from grammatical errors, and should contain relevant facts with authentic data.

11.6 ORGANISATION OF A REPORT

There are three ways in which a report can be organized. These are:

1) Letter form;
2) Memorandum form;
3) Letter-text combination form.

1) Letter form- In the letter form of report writing, the title, date, address, salutation, the body, complimentary close, and signature are all mentioned. The body of the letter can be further divided into the following parts

a). **Introduction**- What is the purpose of the report? Why is the report needed? What is the problem area in hand? The answers to all these questions should be covered in the introduction part.

b). **Findings-** The next few paragraphs present the findings of the investigation.

c). **Recommendations-** This is the most vital part of the report as it gives a bird's eye view about the suggestions and recommendations which are to be incorporated in the near future. This part can orient the readers of the report to take important decisions as well as the section of the report gives new pieces of information and insights and directly addresses the nature of the problem.

2) Memorandum form- the simplest way to draft a report is the memorandum style of writing. The date is mentioned at the top. It is followed by the name of the person to whom the report is addressed, the name of the writer, and the subject of the report. A format of the memorandum form is given below.

Memorandum
Date
To:
From:
Subject:
Report content

Large business houses have different types of printed forms to send reports. This simplifies the procedure and ensures a uniform style.

3) Letter-text combination form- Long reports are usually written in the letter-text combination form. A complete report in this form includes three major parts and these are:

I) Introductory parts;

II) Body of the report;

III) Addenda

It is not essential that a report contains all these parts. Long reports containing most of these parts are generally submitted in book form.

11.7 COMPONENTS OF LETTER-TEXT COMBINATION FORM OF REPORTS

Let us now discuss different components of the letter-text combination form of reports.

The complete outline of such a report is as follows:

1) Introductory parts

- Letter of transmittal or letter of presentation
- Title page
- Table of contents
- List of illustrations
- Abstract and/or summary.

II) Body of the report

- Introduction
- Discussion or description:
- Conclusion
- Recommendations.

III) Addenda

- List of References
- Bibliography
- Glossary
- Appendices
- Index

I. INTRODUCTORY PARTS

Letter of transmittal or letter of presentation

A letter of transmittal is a formal letter written to transmit the report from the writer to the reader. It includes details like (1) providing a permanent record of transfer; (ii) highlighting the date on which the report was submitted; (iii) mentioning the name and position of the writer of the report; (iv) stating when and by whom the report was authorized.

A letter of presentation is slightly different from a letter of transmittal. In addition to giving the information contained in the letter of transmittal, it usually states the purpose and scope of the report and refers to the writer's sources of information, and highlights special features.

Title page- The title page gives the title or heading of the report, the person(s) to whom it is submitted, the date of submission, and the name of the writer(s).

Table of contents- In the case of long reports, it is advisable to give the table of contents in the beginning. The benefit of giving the table of contents is that it helps in locating the desired content which the reader wishes to read. The table of contents gives the title and the page number of each chapter.

List of illustrations- The illustrations are usually given after the table of contents. The list gives the number, title of the illustrations being mentioned in the report.

Abstract and/or summary- In the case of long reports, it is advisable to give an abstract or summary of the report for a quick reference. An abstract is also called a synopsis. An abstract tells about the exact nature of the report, the finding of the report in short. There are no hard and fast rules regarding the ideal length of the abstract.

II. BODY OF THE REPORT

Introduction- The introduction is the first part of the body of the report. It includes the following items of information:

1) Authorization for the report;
2) Theoretical and technical background;
3) Scope of study, with a clear description of the limitations;
4) Methods of collecting data and mention of primary and secondary sources of data;
5) Definitions of special terms; if needed.

Discussion or description- This is the main part of the report. It presents in a very logical way the various aspects of the issue under headings and sub-headings. It may include excerpts from other published reports along with charts, graphs, statistical tables.

Conclusion and recommendations- On the basis of the facts and data presented under the heading 'findings', the writer infers definite conclusions. This is the most important part of the report as here the crux of the report is mentioned. The recommendations mentioned here are of key importance because they will help the management in channelizing their future course of action.

III. ADDENDA

List of references- The works cited in the text are either credited in footnotes on the page on which they are cited or mentioned together in the list of references. Some writers also mention the references in the footnotes if the number of search references is not too much. On the other hand, if the number of the references is more than they should be presented at the end.

Bibliography- It includes the work reviewed by the writer and is given in the bibliography.

Glossary- Glossary section includes the meanings of all the technical terms being used in the report. It is not easy for everybody to understand the meaning of all the technical, financial terminologies mentioned in the report. If the report is made for seasoned professionals; glossary section may be skipped as they are already acquainted with the meanings of the technical terms.

Appendices- Statistical data, charts, and diagrams that are not included in the main body of the report for maintaining the smooth, uninterrupted flow of the report. They are put at the end in the form of appendices.

Index- In case of lengthy reports, an index of the contents of the report may be included.

Signature- A report must be dated and signed by the person(s) who has (have) made it. Somebody has to take the accountability of signing the report. As for signing, the report makes you responsible for the authenticity of the content which has been mentioned in the report.

Activity 1

You are the marketing head of a mobile manufacturing Organisation named as X. Your organisation is receiving strong competition from Y Mobile. Organize a meeting with the sales head, R&D Head and conduct a market survey with the distributors of X mobile to understand the perception of people regarding X mobiles. After taking all these inputs, draft a business report to the managing director of the X mobiles.

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11.8 RESEARCH REPORT

Research is the systematic investigation into study of a natural phenomenon or materials or sources or existing conditions of the society in order to identify facts or to get additional information and derive new conclusions. Research reports are prepared by the researchers or statisticians after analyzing the information gathered by conducting organized research, typically in the form of surveys or qualitative methods.

The key components of a research report are as follow:

A) Preliminary Section

1) Title Page

The title page is one of the most important pages of the research report. The following mentioned information should be incorporated on the title page:

1) Name(s) of the author(s)
2) Name and position of the mentor
3) Name of the programme in which the research was completed
4) Department in which the research was conducted
5) Contact information of both author(s) and mentor(s)

2) Acknowledgments (if any)

This section is devoted to expressing gratitude to all the persons, mentors even the institutions that have made this research possible.

3) Table of Contents

The chapters, sections, figures, sub-sections must be properly listed and organized in a systematic way. The table of content helps the readers to identify the content and its relevant position.

4) List of Tables (if any)

The details of the list of tables being used in the research should be mentioned separately as it will help the reader to locate any table to which s/he might wish to refer.

5) List of Figures (if any)

The details of the list of tables being used in the research should be mentioned separately as it will help the reader to locate any table to which s/he might wish to refer to.

6) Abstract

The abstract of any research contains a summary of the details mentioned in the report.

B) Main Body

The main body includes the following components:

1) Introduction –This includes the details about the topic with problem statement and theoretical background of the topic.

2) Review of Related Literature- A literature review is a summary of all the previous research which has been done on a given topic. A literature review creates a "platform" for the reader, giving him a holistic understanding of the research work done in his/her field and helps the researcher to channelize his/her efforts in the right direction.

3) Research Methodology- Both qualitative and quantitative research is applied to find answers to research questions. The chapter is set to satisfy the research objectives.

It should talk about the following points

- Details of the Research,
- Design and tools to be used
- Sources of Data collection
- Sampling study
- Statistical Tools being used

4) **Analysis of Data-** Data Analysis is the logical process of applying various statistical techniques and tools to condense the data, recapitulation of data, describe the data, and finally evaluate it systematically.

5) **Summary and Conclusions-** The following details must be incorporated in the summary and conclusion section of the research report:

   - **Restatement of the Problem-** This section refers to the summary and conclusion part.
   - **Major Findings**- After the application of various statistical tools and techniques the observations and results will pinpoint some major results i.e. the findings. The major findings will provide revealing information useful for the research and all the readers.
   - **Conclusions-** The essence of the report is discussed in this part of the research report.
   - **Recommendations-** As research is an ongoing process, certain advancements and new changes will surely take place in the times to come. The researcher should mention those areas in which further studies can be conducted.
   - **Limitations of the study-** Every research will have some limitations and it is quite a normal thing. One should always acknowledge the limitations in a research report with transparency.
   - **Reference Section-** It comprises of the following sub-sections
     - Endnotes
     - Bibliography or Literature Cited
     - Appendix

The research report is normally used for the summer projects and academic studies. However, it is seen that the business houses too have started using the research reports in their research and development section.

11.9 TECHNICAL REPORTS

A technical report is a formal report in nature. These reports are drafted to convey technical information in an easy way which is easy to comprehend. Presenting the technical report is a challenging task as technical terminologies being used in the report is not everyone's cup of tea. The ability to simplify the language and the art of presenting a difficult concept easily are the two skills required by a report writer. In a technical report,

there are various elements and parts and all of them have to be connected and presented methodically to make the report impressive.

The tools that facilitate writing a technical description can be definition and classification. The following points would facilitate in designing a good definition.

i) Use simple words which are self-explanatory;

ii) Ensuring that the definition be comprehensive to the reader;

iii) Avoid using abstract words as they may create confusion;

iv) The definition should be holistic in nature.

Classification in technical reports can be done in the following ways.

- Specify the type of classification. Classification can be based on parameters like utility, nature, size etc.
- Classification can be subjective in nature i.e. based on one's own comfort or by keeping the readers of the report in mind.

After the definition and classification, the next step involved is a technical description of machines/mechanisms and processes in the report.

Machines and Mechanisms

A machine is a complex collection of various parts and sub-parts. Each and every part is connected with each other and works in a synchronization. These parts of the machine have to be explained clearly and accurately and this is the first step in any technical report writing.

Describing Processes

Can you visualize a process without any machine or device? It is next to impossible. While describing a machine the main focus is on the parts and objects but on the other hand when we describe a process the entire focus is on the work or operation it performs. Therefore, it is quite necessary to describe each step in a process very clearly and accurately and also to show how the various steps combined together in a logical sequence lead to an end result.

11.10 BUSINESS PROPOSAL

A business proposal is a formal document used in business. A business proposal is normally sent to a prospective client where the buyer explains about the products, services being offered by them, USP of their product or service, and why they should be considered above their competitors. Business proposals are carefully drafted as they target prospective clients. There are different types of business proposals and they are made as per the requirement.

Let us now discuss different types of business proposals.

Types of Business Proposals

A business proposal can be classified into **solicited** or **unsolicited**. In a solicited proposal, a prospective client might be interested in availing the services or buying a product so the clients put up a request to the seller for a proposal. The seller after receiving the request can have a conversation with the client; the seller then tries to understand the preferences of the clients and drafts the proposals accordingly.

With an unsolicited business proposal, things are different. Here the seller approaches a client aspiring him/her to sell the product or services. Here the client does not approach the seller but the seller tries to generate the need of the product by drafting a lucrative proposal.

A solicited proposal is an easy game, as your prospective client has already made up his/her mind to buy a product or a service. Your prospective client may have identified other sellers as well. The prospective client may be in the process of evaluating the other sellers in this process.

11.11 COMPONENTS OF A BUSINESS PROPOSAL

A good business proposal involves key components. These components are discussed as follows:

Title page

The business proposal should have the following details on the title page. It should have one's' name, the name of the organisation, the name of the prospective client to whom the proposal is to be submitted and the date of submitting the proposal.

Table of contents

If the proposal is lengthy and has too many details, it is advisable to mention the details in the table of contents. The details will actually help the client to identify the various sections of the proposals and s/he may specifically refer to any section as per his/her preference.

Executive summary

In a proposal, one should always include a well-drafted, articulated executive summary. A good executive summary is the one that positions the organisation, or the product, or the service very promisingly in the mind of the customer. It leaves an impression about the USP and the need for the product.

Statement of problem, issue, or job at hand

The customization of the proposal which directly understands the needs of the client is a very important point of any proposal. If the proposal is pertaining to the development of a website, the seller should understand the exact purpose of the website such as whether it is to enhance the sales or to create brand awareness or to have more visitors on the website etc. Understanding the customer’s requirements and addressing those issues is a winning strategy of each proposal.

Approach and methodology

This section is one of the most vital sections of the proposal. The reason is that in this section the seller directly addresses the clients' requirements or the client's problem at hand.

One should not get into too many details here as at times the technical terminology used may confuse the clients. The objective of this section is to give the client a very clear view of the plan and how s/he is going to benefit.

Qualifications

This is the section where one can convince the client.One can mention any relevant education, industry-specific training, or certifications, or any unique skill set acquired or developed in due course of time, experience and expertise.This section will brief the prospective customer about the expertise and the reason for giving a chance.

Schedule and benchmarks

Right from the beginning be very clear to adhere to the expectations of the clients. What is the time duration required to complete the work, deliver the product or services are few questions which must be clearly discussed with the clients? One should never overpromise and under-deliver here. The proposer and the prospective client should come to common terms with these points as proper completion of a project or delivery of a product on time deeply impacts business operations. One must never set unrealistic expectations with the clients. In case of products or services, certain quality benchmarks are very important. Any compromise on quality will not be appreciated. Once the deadlines, schedules, and benchmarks are decided, they have to be adhered to.

Cost, payment and any legal matters

While drafting this section the most important point to be considered is transparency in the cost. The cost of the product, details of partial payments (if any) schedules of payment in installments etc. should be clearly mentioned in the proposal. There should be no hidden cost in the proposal and transparency should be maintained here. In case of any conflicts, legal matters such as permits, licensing etc. should be clearly mentioned.

Benefits

This part addresses all the benefits which the client will have from the moment the services of the buyer are taken. Features like all-time support, free service details, cost-cutting advantages with giving reference of the other clients must be written here.

11.12 PERSUASIVE PROPOSALS

The persuasive proposals as the name suggests try to persuade the client to take the services. While making persuasive proposals the following points should be considered:

1) Answer the question, "WHY?"

Every client searches for the answer to one question in the proposal. The question is "What is in it for me"? The client has to be told why the seller is the best in the market.

Every proposal should answer these 'why?' questions:

- Why should the client choose your business?
- Why should the client not choose any other competitor?
- Why is your product/service the right choice for the client?
- Why should they trust you?
- What makes you an expert in the product/services?
- Why should the client spend his/her money on your product/service?

2) Complete understanding of the client

The seller should have a meticulous understanding of the needs, likes and dislikes, tastes, and preferences of the client. This will help the seller to provide tailor-made, customized solutions to the clients. Thus after understanding the client's requirements the seller should directly address the clients' requirements or the client's problem at hand.

3) Use the 'Problem, Agitate, Solution' technique

It is important that the client's problem is understood thoroughly. The next step is to agitate the problem, tell the client the disadvantages of the problem, the cost factor involved, the risk associated with it, and how crucial it is to opt for a solution. Then provide a doable solution which.

4) Provide social testimonies

The proposer should always illustrate the experiences of those clients who were facing the same problem and how their business has been reformed after the services of the buyer were availed. The testimonies of the clients and how

they have got the benefits that can be expressed in the proposal. The details of the clients who got the benefits, the details of their organisations and their pictures can be drafted in the proposal.

5) Design should be persuasive

The way one format and designs may give the proposal a cutting edge over the competitors. The design should be colourful, legible, aesthetically pleasing, and have a professional look which can play a very vital role.

Here are four basic rules to follow when designing the proposal:

- Do not overburden every page with text;
- Use whitespace and lively images to let the design stand out;
- Make balanced and apt use of colour;
- Use legible and nice typography.

Activity 2

You are working as the Creative Head of an Interior Design organisation in Delhi. Lots of new hotel chains are coming up in South Delhi. Identify a few hotel chains in South Delhi and try to understand their interior designing requirements. Draft effective proposals about your firm and services offered to these hoteliers.

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11.13 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BUSINESS REPORT AND BUSINESS PROPOSAL

There is a difference between the business proposal and the business report. The differences based on certain parameters are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Difference between Business Proposal and Business Report

Parameters	Business Report	Business Proposal
	Exploring the reasons behind any business issue/problem. Such as a). Reasons for high turnover b). SWOT analysis of the business. c). Exploring reasons for low sales.	To generate sales and target prospective clients.
Key elements	Data collection methods, details of research layout, Data analysis of scientific report, Findings & observations, Recommendations.	Products or services, Benefits, organisation information, pricing information, pricing structure
Purpose	To address a business issue, exploring new insights and information.	Approach to offer solutions, products, services to address the needs and requirements of prospective clients.
Document type	Internal	External
Scope	Vast as it addresses business problems in hand.	Limited

Shared with	Only sent to stakeholders concerned with it.	Sent to the target group such as clients.
Plans for	Future as the focus is addressing and exploring specific reasons for any business concern	Present to enhance the sales volume.
Offers	Factual and insightful description of the business issue in hand.	A value proposition and call to action.
Time-bound	Holds a long-term objective with a scope to incorporate new changes in the existing business issue.	Time-sensitive document as the objective is to convert the business proposal in a timely sale.

11.14 SUMMARY

The manager, secretaries, accountants, chief executive, and experts are often required to submit reports on various issues such as low sales volume, the feasibility of any premises, the establishment of a new branch, the scope of diversification, imports and exports issues, any conflict or financial issues, etc. They need to be meticulous and investigate the issue at hand properly so that the right solution to the problem at hand can be recorded. Thus reports are being frequently used in all organisations as a form of business communication. A good report has to be result-oriented, precise, with accurate facts, relevant giving concrete recommendations. Business proposals are very important sales tools as they present the products or even the chain of products in front of the customers. A business proposal should be sound lucrative and must address the likes, preferences, and tastes of the customers. Business proposals should be designed to mention the USP of the product and should also mention how a product is relevant and congruent with the customer's needs.

11.15 KEYWORDS

Informal reports: An informal report may not be specifically prepared as per the rules and permanent obligations and protocols of the organisation.

Formal reports: A report that is prepared as per the set protocols, formats and as per the rules and regulations of the organisation.

Periodic or Routine reports: They are drafted as per specific frequencies of time.

Business proposal: A business proposal is normally sent to a prospective client where the buyer explains about the products, services being offered by them, USP of their product or service and why they should be considered above their competitors.

Unsolicited business proposal: The seller tries to generate the need of the product by drafting a lucrative proposal.

Solicited proposal: A solicited proposal is an easy game, as your prospective client has already made up his/her mind to buy a product or a service.

11.16 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) What is a report? What are the characteristics of a good report?
2) What do you mean by a business proposal? What are the components of a business proposal?
3) Prepare a report for submission to the Board of Directors regarding the market potential of electronic equipment.

11.17 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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BLOCK 4
COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATION

BLOCK 4 COMMUNICATION IN ORGANISATION

This is the last block of the course. This block has 4 units and it focusses on the role of communications in organisations.

Unit 12 Communication for Employment: In this unit we will discuss communication for employment which includes resume building, CV development, difference between the two etc. It also describes the role of interviews as part of communication.

Unit13 Technology and Communication: This unit as the name suggests discusses the relationship of technology and communication. Here you will learn the use of different modes of technology being used for communication. This unit also explains how one can manage their social media profiles as effective communication strategy.

Unit 14 Cross Cultural Communication: As the name suggests this unit focusses on the role of culture in communication which is one of the major factors in the communication process in organisations. Here, you will learn the concept of cross culture, its types, barriers and how to overcome these barriers.

Unit 15 Ethics in Communication: This is the last unit of the course and it deals with a very important and sensitive concept i.e. ethics in communication. It explains the role of values in communication and how can these be used for resolving issues in the organisation.

UNIT 12 COMMUNICATION FOR EMPLOYMENT

Objectives

After studying this unit, a candidate should be able to:

- Prepare an effective resume;
- Draft curriculum-vitae and portfolio for interview;
- Develop a holistic understanding of the interview process;
- Understand the concept of group discussion.

Structure

12.1 Introduction

12.2 Resume

12.3 Video Resume

12.4 Curriculum-Vitae

12.5 Interview Portfolio

12.6 Interview

12.7 Types of Interviews

12.8 Process of an Interview

12.9 Group Discussion

12.10 Types of Group discussions

12.11 Offer Letter

12.12 Summary

12.13 Keywords

12.14 Self-Assessment Questions

12.15 References and Further Readings

12.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit also discusses the need and importance of a resume and CV. The CV of every candidate must be effective as it creates the first impression. Apart from interviews, the group discussions also at times act as an important tool to analyze the personality traits of the candidates. Every interview is a selling process. The interviewer is a buyer in this process and the interviewee is a seller. The interviewer is a buyer as s/he analyses the interviewee's performance, strengths, and weaknesses and then s/he finally checks whether the candidate can be an asset to the organisation's needs or not. The interviewee is the seller as s/he convinces the interviewer that s/he is the best suitable candidate for the organisation. There are some specific do's and don'ts of the interview process as covered in this unit. These points will guide and empower candidates to be more effective in the interview. Proper

conduct in the group discussions (GD) is important as it reflects the communication skills and behavioural traits of the candidates as well. This unit covers all the nuances about the interview process, GD process and CV.

12.2 RESUME

Resume is a must when applying for a new job, looking for a promotion or looking for better opportunities. A resume is an important form of communication at the workplace. They communicate about an individuals' personality traits and are a major contact between the organisation and the one who is seeking a job or promotion. When a resume is drafted following points should be kept in mind as this is what the organisations look for:

- Does the candidate possess requisite qualifications for a job?
- Does the candidate have some experience which can be considered above the qualifications?
- Is the candidate good in whatever s/he does?

After concentrating on the above points while preparing a resume, it is important that the following features should be taken into consideration:

- Facts
- Groups/Categories
- Tabular presentations

Facts: Resume should be based on actual facts rather than manipulating them. Only the facts like educational/academic qualifications, work experience etc. should be mentioned which can later be substantiated by the hirer.

Groups/Categories: Resume should always be categorised and presented under various heads like educational qualification, work experience, extra-curricular activities etc.

Tabulation: Resume should always be presented in a tabular form having headings and sub-headings. This includes all the categories which a candidate may wish to incorporate.

A resume can be in different formats and it is upto the candidate to select the best suitable format. The following checklist should necessarily be present in the resume:

- Present address
- Professional email
- Important achievements
- Proper categorisation
- Free of errors
- Critical information to be listed at the beginning
- Up-to-date information

- Clean and clear
- Appealing

Apart from these, it is important that the candidate checks with the organisation for the applicable resume style so as to suit their needs. It is, therefore, important that a resume should be prepared in such a manner that it should be able to communicate the exact set of information which the candidate wishes to divulge.

Activity 1

Prepare a resume based on the checklist given in section 12.2.

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12.3 VIDEO RESUME

A video resume is a short video made by a candidate for the purpose of employment. These types of videos are uploaded or emailed to the recruitment manager. Thus the video resume may be later viewed and analysed by the interviewer. In the video, the candidate shares detailed information about their candidature, skill sets, and relevant experience which can make them the best-suited candidate for the organisation they are applying for. Usually, the video is used as a supplement with a paper resume. This type of video resume can also be prepared by professionals where they give candidates enough inputs about the various dos and don'ts of the content to be included or removed from the video. This type of video resume helps the recruiters as they can assess the communication skills, presentation skills, and overall personality of the candidate which otherwise is not possible with a paper resume.

Significance of a video resume

Video resumes are gaining importance slowly and gradually. Still, many recruitment managers prefer to call for the traditional resume as compared to a video resume. Video resumes are preferably used for job roles related to communication, visual or creative fields. For instance, a video resume is very significant for any performance-based job profile like TV anchoring, or those jobs pertaining to stage, training, and teaching. On the other hand, if a candidate's role is not very visual, then a video resume may not be the right tool to portray a candidate's candidature.

The candidate should take utmost care while creating their video resume because once anything is online, it cannot be controlled. An unprofessional video resume can act as a hindrance and block a candidate's chances of getting the calls for the interviews. Now the question arises as to how can one

create an effective video resume? Let us discuss how an effective video resume can be created.

Effective Video Resume

The following checklist should be followed while preparing a video resume to make it more effective:

- Eliminating background distractions
- Use of professional language
- Use proper voice modulation
- Prepare a script
- Script should be based on the requirement of the interviewer
- Precise and short
- Share with mentor and friends for review
- Edit, re-edit before posting

Activity 2

Create a video resume highlighting your skills and experience keeping in mind that this video resume is asked for the profile of Assistant Sales manager in a Bank.

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12.4 CURRICULUM-VITAE

It is important to note that there is a marked difference between a resume and a curriculum vitae (CV). Usually, a resume summarises the credentials of the candidate whereas a CV is a kind of academic/professional diary which includes all the details of the qualifications, work experience, accomplishments, publications and additional information. In this section, we will discuss curriculum-vitae and how to draft it.

A curriculum vitae, often abbreviated as CV and is a vital document that is made by applicants to highlight their skills, academic knowledge, and professional endeavours. The checklist for a good CV is as follows:

- Specific fonts to be used
- Candidate's name must appear on the top right corner of the CV. (Paste photo only if asked)
- Proper spacing and grouping
- Use a formal e-mail-Id;
- A specific career objective;
- Use of simple language

- Avoid jargons and slangs;
- Additional information like hobbies, interests etc.
- References

The CV should be precise and should portray the proper information.

12.5 INTERVIEW PORTFOLIO

A systematic, well-designed, well-articulated portfolio can surely give a candidate an edge above his/her competitors and can impress the recruitment manager. A portfolio is a detailed view of the candidate's qualifications, skill-sets and also provides a sample of his/her work as well. So, in a nutshell, a portfolio is a collection of a candidate's entire skill set, experience and achievements. A candidate can also present his/her portfolio as a website, PowerPoint presentation, or a few chosen printed documents. For example, people who work in creative jobs such as writers and designers may present their samples of articles, blogs, or designs that they have made. Even a bank manager may design a portfolio that includes well-developed financial reports, annual reports which they have prepared.

Significance of an interview portfolio

A portfolio can hugely benefit any candidate as it is the presentation of every skill which a candidate possesses. The significance of the portfolio is as follows:

- **A portfolio portrays creative skills**

  A portfolio gives a chance to highlight a candidate's creative instinct. For example, some candidates design their own portfolio website that highlights their creative branding acumen. A candidate's portfolio should be his/her advertising and branding tool. It must be a reflection of the candidate's personality.

- **Shows inclination towards the job**

  Recruiters want those people who are passionate and enthusiastic about their jobs. The moment a recruiter comes across a well-designed portfolio, it compels him/her to think about the level of sincerity and seriousness of the candidate. A well-articulated portfolio shows tremendous interest and focuses on the job.

- **Portfolio makes the candidate feel more confident and prepared**

  A portfolio helps a candidate to effectively present and better describe his/her project details, skills and experience. During the midst of the interview, if questions are asked about the projects or any technical skills which the candidate possesses, the portfolio can be quickly accessed.

- **Showcases actual examples of skills and work**

  The recall value of the portfolio is high in the mind of the recruiter. A recruiter can also be presented with the actual, tangible proof of the candidate's work and this gives the candidate a strong edge above the other candidates.

Components of a portfolio

Well-designed portfolio may include various things like samples of the candidate's work, works in progress, certifications, awards along with the candidate's professional experiences and qualifications. In addition to it, there should be a systematic flow of a portfolio. It should consist of the following:

- Commence with candidate’s introduction
- Highlight professional background
- Opt STAR formula
- Include candidate’s achievements
- Define candidate’s goals
- Conclude with prominent points
- Choose the most effective medium to design candidate’s portfolio
- Keep evolving candidate’s portfolio
- Make it easy to comprehend

Now let us discuss these components in detail.

Start with an introduction

The opening lines of the candidate's portfolio should be eye-catching. In one or two sentences, the candidate must highlight his/her USP and the unique skill sets possessed by him/her. Do mention extra qualifications that ensure a candidate's possibility for the ideal candidate for the job.

Highlight professional background

After the introduction, highlight the candidate's professional background. A visual timeline of education, work experience (if any) is recommended. One must also highlight specific achievements and contributions at each stage. Specific contributions will position the candidate as a productive candidate and also reflects his/her zeal for contribution.

Opt STAR formula

Hiring managers often check the credibility of the candidates by asking them situational-based questions. The best way to handle the situational based questions is STAR format. The advantage of this format is that it brings a methodical approach in the candidate's expression. The full form of STAR formula is as follows:

- **Situation:** Recall the situation the candidate was in.
- **Task:** Describe the task the candidate had to do.
- **Action:** Outline the action the candidate took.
- **Result:** Describe the results the candidate achieved.

For instance if a candidate is applying for the position of a team leader in any bank, then the candidate must highlight certain experiences where s/he

handled certain conflicts, his/her leadership traits, team management problems with the help of STAR format.

Include achievements

Awards and achievements act as a candidate's third-party references which show that candidate's work has been appreciated by others as well.

Define goals

This section of the candidate's portfolio should reflect the candidate's professional goals for the next few years. This section must be explored to stress how much a candidate is willing to get this job and how this job suits the candidate's overall career goal and career map. A strategic way to do this is by exploring and locating any challenges the company might be facing or witnessing and how a candidate plans to handle them in case the s/he is offered the position.

Conclude with prominent points

Candidate can conclude his/her portfolio with a crisp statement that presents important details about his/her candidature.

Choose the most effective medium to design portfolio

There can be a variety of ways in which a portfolio may be designed. The most important question is what suits the candidate and what can be the most effective way for the candidate. For example, a web developer may create a website to design his/her portfolio where s/he can portray his/her technical and creative acumen. The key is to identify what suits the candidate.

Keep working on the portfolio

With the career escalation, the skills and qualifications also evolve simultaneously. The upgraded versions of candidate's skills, qualifications must be regularly updated in the portfolio. Candidate's portfolio should communicate the message that his/her skills are being updated and upgraded and s/he is not stagnant rather is growing professionally.

Make it easy to comprehend

Use good language and the structure of the sentences should be apt with no grammatical errors.

12.6 INTERVIEW

Interview refers to a formal, in-depth conversation between two or more persons, wherein the exchange of information takes place, with a view of checking a candidate's acceptability for the job. Interviews are considered to be the most practical way to understand the personality traits of the interviewee. There are various ways in which the interviewer can assess the candidate. S/he may ask technical or subject-based questions to check the technical acumen of the candidate, certain HR-based questions can be asked to check the behavioural skills of the candidates.The time range of an

interview is a subjective matter. The interviews may be 5minutes long to one hour or even more. Sometimes the candidate is selected in just 5minutes and sometimes a candidate may even get rejected after an hour-long interview. It all depends on how clearly and confidently the candidate creates the right impression in the mind of the interviewer.

12.7 TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

There are many types of interviews that serve different scenarios. Knowing what to expect can help a candidate to meet his/her goals. In this section, we will discuss some common forms of interviews.

1. **Screening or Telephonic interview-** Calling a candidate at the office premises, organising the interviews and engaging the workforce to coordinate these interviews has its own cost. Sometimes, the organisations opt for initial screening of the candidates through telephonic interviews so that certain good and promising candidates can be identified. In these types of interviews, a preliminary check about the candidate's confidence, communication, and clarity of thoughts is assessed. Suitable candidates are then called for the other round of the interview.

2. **Personal interview-** This is the most common type of interview and usually takes place in person at the organisation's headquarters. The duration of the personal interviews may vary from 5 minutes to 60 minutes.

3. **Behaviour-based interview**- This interview method goes much deeper than the usual interview method. It requires thorough preparation of concrete examples that demonstrate candidates' attributes in key areas such as teamwork, problem-solving abilities, creativity, flexibility and organisational strength.

4. **Task-based interviews or Tests-** These types of interviews are designed to be creative and analytical in solving problems across various tasks or assignments. It may include a short test to assess a candidate's technical knowledge and skills.

5. **Stress interview-** This interview method is rare and the interviewer prompts to see a candidate's reaction. The point is to highlight a candidate's weaknesses and see how they react under pressure. Tactics can range from constant interruptions and weird silences to challenging questions which can push the candidate over the edge.

6. **Management-based interview-** In these interviews, certain management-based situations can be given to the candidates and the managerial skills can be assessed. At times certain case studies or live situations in a team can be put in front of the candidate and then he may be asked to analyze the situation accordingly.

7. **Focused interviews-** For certain specialized jobs, the analytical approach of the candidate may be assessed. Certain situations of a live-

work profile may be given to the candidates. These types of interviews are very focused as they specifically check the aptitude of the candidate by putting them across the daily challenges which they would face in their day-to-day work.

8. **Exit interviews-** In present times, most of the organisations go for exit interviews. These are done when an employee exits from the organisation for one or the other reason. The organisations conduct such interviews to get the feedback about the organisations functioning which will help them assess their situation.

12.8 PROCESS OF AN INTERVIEW

The process of an interview is a multi-stage process and takes place to hire new employees. There are certain steps involved in the interview process. These are:

- Job description
- Advertising the job
- Screening
- Scheduling interview
- Preliminary interview
- Personal interview
- Follow-up
- Hiring

Interview in itself is not the only step in the whole process. It starts with designing the job description which gives the details of the qualifications, attributes, and skills expected etc. After finalizing the job description, the job is posted and the applications are invited. These applications are then screened and then interviews are scheduled. Applications are then screened and shortlisted. The shortlisted candidates are called for the preliminary rounds of interviews. Further shortlisting is done and then the final round of interviews is conducted. After this stage, the best candidate is hired.

12.9 GROUP DISCUSSION

Group discussion (GD) is not only about 'talking'- not even about 'talking sense' but it is more than talking sense. It also includes practising a candidate's intellectual capacities to thoroughly consider the subject, pay attention to the perspectives of the other individuals, incorporating their perspectives with the candidate’s own, and assisting the GD with showing up a consistently intelligent answer for the issue being talked about.

Debating and public talking are one-to-numerous correspondence circumstances though a GD is a many-to-numerous circumstance. To put it simply, in a GD, it is the perspective of the whole gathering that matters the most, unlike that of a debate or public speaking.

In a GD, the time designated is implied and is intended for the whole gathering and not to any one person. During the assigned time, every individual from the group will take part and each member needs to pay attention to the perspectives of other individuals in the group. It is a conversation and the speaker will be 'intruded' by other individuals from the gathering while s/he is talking. Likewise, every member attempts to "grab" the opportunity to talk or make sincere attempts to drive the discussion.

Need for a group discussion

A GD estimates certain properties of the applicants that are generally hard to recognize and tedious to evaluate. Various individuals who can impart their thoughts well and examine successfully with others in a coordinated circumstance become silent in a GD. A GD distinguishes individuals who have such abilities and individuals who don't. Then, at that point, there are certain individuals who will make excellent audience members in a coordinated circumstance yet with regards to being individuals from a gathering, their listening abilities simply evaporate and all they appear to be keen on is their voice being heard by the group. In any GD, the individuals ought to have the tolerance and ability to pay attention to the perspectives of different individuals from the gathering. A GD is in this manner utilized viably by selectors to survey whether the applicant has those skills required by the organisation or not.

12.10 TYPES OF GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Group discussions can be divided into three broad categories based on the topic/issue given for discussion:

1. Topic-based group discussions
2. Case-based group discussions (also called Case Studies), and
3. Article-based group discussions

Now let us understand each type of discussion below.

1. Topic-based group discussion

In a topic-based group discussion the topics that are given in group discussions can be classified into;

- Information based topics
- Non-knowledge-based topics

These classifications are explained below -

- **Information-based topics**

  Information-based topics expect candidates to be well-read. Information-based subjects fall into various classifications dependent on the kind of information required.

- **Non-Knowledge-based topics**

  Non-information-based points are those that do not need any information base in a particular area for a candidate to have the option to discuss

them. Routine and everyday information is adequate to work effectively in discussing such subjects. Candidate's common information and presence of mind will help him/her in taking on these types of topics.

Non-information-based points themselves can be classified into two areas – substantial subjects and theoretical or conceptual themes.

a. Substantial topics

While there is a great deal of conversation conceivable on these subjects, the focal point of conversation is extremely clear, independent of who talks about these themes.

b. Conceptual themes

Conceptual themes are those with regard to which the actual understanding can fluctuate from one individual to another. Discussions on these themes can be exceptionally shapeless. In these GDs, a candidate has to think out of the box and needs to come up with multiple interpretations.

2. Case-based group discussions

In such discussions, a hypothetical situation or a situation from real life is given which is then floated to the group. The group is then asked to discuss the situation and try to interpret and analyse the situation. This type of GD is used to assess the analytical ability of the candidate.

3. Article-based group discussions

These GDs cover a wide range of areas, like current affairs, politics, economics, and technology, etc. The participants are given 4-5 minutes to read the article and are then asked to hold a regular group discussion of around 10-15 minutes on the article.

Group discussions are important as they help the recruiters to assess the problem solving and analytical abilities of the candidates.

12.11 OFFER LETTER

An offer letter is a part of formal business communication. It is usually written by any organisation which promises to offer a job, placement, internship, part-time job to any selected candidate. The offer letters are usually written by the HR department of an organisation. The offer letter as the name suggests offers the complete information of the job, the profile being offered. It consists of the terms and conditions of the employment i.e. the salary package being offered, tenure of bond (if any), details of incentives based upon the performance, joining date, entry and exit policy of the organisation, medical insurance, earned and casual leaves etc.

A professionally written offer letter must be transparent which means that the terms and conditions of the employment should be clearly written without any hidden information. The terms and conditions should be easily understood by the reader as well. The offer letter is of significance because in

case if the employee leaves the organisation untimely, or is caught in any malicious act then at that time the terms and conditions in the offer letter can act as an important point of reference.

12.12 SUMMARY

In this competitive world, every candidate wishes to secure a lucrative employment offer. Some of the ideal characteristics which every recruiter would like to see in any candidate are clarity of thoughts, proactive approach, emotional balance and sound academic knowledge with good communication skills. Every candidate should prepare an effective CV/resume or a portfolio which can help the candidate to market himself effectively. The interview is the first step that every candidate comes across. The interview is a meticulous discussion that takes place between an interviewer and an interviewee. Every interview is a selling process where the candidate is a seller and tries to present himself/herself effectively so that the recruiter can offer him/her a good job opportunity. Interviews have certain rules and regulations which every candidate must keep in mind. Apart from interviews, group discussions also assess various personality traits in a candidate such as group behaviour skills, leadership skills, patience, communication skills and ability to convince etc.

12.13 KEYWORDS

Group Discussion: A GD is a platform where few people analyse and discuss a topic in order to develop a holistic understanding of the topic and develop insights about the topic in order to reach a sensible conclusion.

Video-Resume: A video resume is a short video made by a candidate for the purpose of employment.

Interview Portfolio: A portfolio is a detailed view of the candidate's qualifications, skill-sets and also provides a sample of his/her work.

Interview: Interview refers to a formal, in-depth conversation between two or more persons, wherein the exchange of information takes place, with a view of checking a candidate's acceptability for the job.

Offer Letter: An offer letter is a part of formal business communication and is usually written by any organisation which promises to offer a job, placement, internship, part-time job to any selected candidate.

12.14 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) What are the various points to be considered while creating an effective Video-Resume?
2) Do candidates agree with the statement that "An effective portfolio gives candidates an edge over others in an interview"? Why?
3) What is an interview?
4) What are the various types of an interview?
5) Explain the interview process?

12.15 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 13 TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of technology in communication;
- explore the effective tools of technology in communication;
- explore other multimedia tools in presentations; and
- learn the management of Social Media management.

Structure

Structure

13.1 Introduction
13.2 Internet and Intranet
13.3 Multimedia Presentations
13.4 Information & Communication Technology
13.5 Virtual meetings
13.6 Teleconferencing
13.7 Video Conference
13.8 Messaging tools
13.9 Rich Media and Lean Media
13.10 Social media management
13.11 Summary
13.12 Keywords
13.13 Self-Assessment Questions
13.14 References and Further Readings

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Information technology has changed the way of every business operation from designing the product to managing the logistics and supply chain. Today Information technology is impacting the business very rapidly. Instant flow of information and messages has become the lifeline of effective and timely decision-making. Many presentation software are available which have transformed the way of presentations too. Today it is easier to be connected to all the stakeholders of the business with the help of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT). Various application tools help in saving time and money and have become effective tools of communication. The use of social media profiles too has increased to highlight the presence in the market. In this unit we will study all these aspects and learn how ICT has penetrated our daily as well as professional lives.

13.2 INTERNET AND INTRANET

Internet is an open field and there is no central administration to it.TCP/IP protocol is the prime operating agent for the internet used by the connected networks which may also involve other protocols like HTTP, FTP, and SMTP. Apart from these, there are other protocols which have been used since the genesis of the internet such as Telnet, FTP (File Transfer Protocol), Internet Relay Chat, Gopher, Usenet News, WWW (World Wide Web). E-mails are the most important development when we talk about the internet. Internet has the following features:

- It is a global system
- It is a public network
- The information is accessible
- It has large number of users
- It is less secure
- It is not regulated
- It has high traffic.

Intranet

As we know that intranet is a private computer network but in order to operate it has to use internet protocols, network connectivity to access, communicate and share vital information within the virtual boundaries of an organisation. Intranet uses the same client-server model running on the TCP/IP protocol which is identical to an internet. The features of intranet are:

- It is a private network
- Only the users have access
- It is a more secured network
- It has limited users
- The traffic is limited

Table 1 presents the comparison between internet and intranet.

Table 1: Comparison of Internet and Intranet

BASIS FOR COMPARISON	INTERNET	INTRANET
Meaning	Connects various network of computers together	Vital part of Internet which is privately owned by a particular organisation
Accessibility	Easily accessible by anyone	Only employees, members of the organisation can access with their login details.
Safety	Prone to cyber attacks	Safer, as it functions within the organisation.

No of Users	Unlimited as everyone can access it anytime	Limited as organisational members can only access.
Visitors Traffic	High	Low
Network Type	Public networks	Private network as it is limited to the organisation
Information Provided	Unlimited	Organisational information only

13.3 MULTIMEDIA PRESENTATIONS

Presentation is an important part of organisations. Proper, systematic, lively presentations can leave deep, long-lasting impacts in the minds of clients, team and all the stakeholders directly or indirectly involved in a business. Power-point presentations are no doubt effective but Multimedia software have surely developed an edge over these in due course of time. The simple reason is multimedia presentations are equipped with different tools and features which can leave the audience totally fascinated. New cutting edge features like stock photos, audio narration, background music, custom transitions, animations, animated icons, sound effects etc. are available in multimedia presentations.

For corporates, time is the most important resource. Organisations wish to establish strong impacts right away in the first meeting or first conversation with their stakeholders. Organisations use multimedia presentations in trade show displays; demonstrate the functioning of their products with the help of the presentation software.

Recall value in the customers' mind, long-lasting impacts, a customer turning up into a potential customer are the points in the priority list of the organisations. To achieve all these targets, creative presentations have to be equipped with various tools. Following is the list of commonly used tools included in multimedia presentations:

- Text
- Images
- Video
- Sound
- GIFs
- Animation
- Charts
- Transitions
- Narration
- Sound FX

Now, let us explore the five most effective multimedia presentation applications which can be used in making the presentations more lively and

effective although many multimedia applications are available in the virtual world. The features of frequently used multimedia presentations software are given below:

1) **Focusky (https://focusky.com/):** Focusky is an open source **presentation software** that is highly recommended for multimedia presentations for organisations. This tool helps in creating beautiful animated presentations and can make the communication highly effective. With the help of Focusky effective presentations can be designed for educational purposes, business presentations in meetings, technology, fashion, and other sectors as well. Animated presentations leave a deeper impact on the audience and help in longer retention.

2) **Adobe Premiere (https://www.adobe.com/in/products/premiere.html):** Adobe Premiere is an effective presentation software for fabricating deep impact video presentations. Today, video editing software is being explored by the creative teams in an organisation. Any type of media can be edited in its native format and a professional presentation can be made which can be used for film, TV, and web.

3) Reveal.js (https://revealjs.com/) : If someone is looking for multi-touch presentations then Reveal.js is the answer which is one of the most popular open source. This tool helps in developing, deploying and measuring interactive digital experience. The pre-built sample tools make it viable to develop animated presentations including images, videos, documents, 3D models, and maps.

4) Libre Office (https://www.libreoffice.org/): This Windows based platform is one of the favorite choices for commercial settings and educational purposes.

5) Video presentation software: This is the presentation software which can help you develop scintillating high-definition, whiteboard-style animation video presentations without the knowledge of design or technical acumen.

Activity 1

Use and explore presentation software other than Power-Point and design a presentation on **"Barriers of Communication"**.

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13.4 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The term "Information and Communication Technology" (ICT) refers to all of the technologies and services involved in computing, data protocol management, telecommunications, and the internet. ICT aims to provide newer and more innovative ways for people to interact, network, gain access to information, excel, and learn all at the same time. Information and communication technology (ICT) now has a significant economic impact. The technology sector holds a significant portion of economic activity around the globe, as economies, employment, and personnel have become more automated and the world has become a global village.

Importance of Information and Communication Technology

a) ICT and e-commerce

The ICT infrastructure that formerly drove simple credit or debit card transactions and centralized record-keeping for commercial organisations continue to expand in retail and other customer-facing environments, and e-commerce now merges with the shopping experience itself.

Consumers can now shop for goods and services online from the convenience of their own homes. Using database technology and shopper-friendly websites or applications, today's consumers may shop for goods and services online from the comfort of their own homes or on their mobile phones. And cutting edge technologies like augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR), and artificial intelligence (AI) are allowing potential consumers to have quick, interactive access to product information and even try them out.

b) ICT and a New Business

Ecommerce and the expansion of ICT have brought considerable changes to how commercial organisations function behind the scenes, in addition to new routes for purchasing and new means of showing and promoting goods. Mobile devices and real time communications, combined with developments in data analytics and artificial intelligence, enable retail sales people to work more efficiently.

c) Manufacturing Innovations

ICT is a useful support mechanism in the manufacturing sector, capable of making design and production more robust, effective, and efficient through the use of computer-based precision engineering, virtualized systems, and computer simulation. Despite ongoing concerns about the potential impact of trade volatility, tariffs, and the global economic slowdown the industry remains optimistic.

d) New Methods of Manufacturing

ICT is a useful support mechanism in the manufacturing sector, capable of making design and production more robust, effective, and efficient through the use of computer-based precision engineering, virtualized systems, and computer simulation.

e) Customer feedback loops

Customer feedback loops and data analytics are both powered by information and communication technology. Both of these factors enable manufacturers to strengthen their relationships with customers while also adding value to the products they create through customization.

f) Reduction in network latency

As the Fourth Industrial Revolution or Industry 4.0 progresses, new communications technologies such as 5G will reduce network latency, increase bandwidth and increase manufacturers' capacity for real-time and near-real-time response.

With 5G integration and Internet of Things (IoT) technology, manufacturers will be able to increase their use of sensors, cloud platforms, centralised tracking, quality inspection and other related systems. Finally, advances in information and communication technology are spawning a new breed of "industrial wearables." Smart glasses and biometric sensors that can connect individual workers to remote databases or industrial resources, as well as robotics, are examples of tools and equipment.

g) ICT and advancements in health care systems

Information and communication technology (ICT) has developed a variety of applications in the health care sector. These applications have tremendously affected domains of patient care, public health, operating costs, and the traditional bureaucracy linked with the medical profession and life sciences. Electronic health records (EHRs) allow healthcare workers to enter patient data into a centralized, digitized system that is accessible to relevant stakeholders such as medical personnel, pharmacies, and insurers. Systems can be configured with alerts and integrated with user authentication and security policies to allow patients access to their health information.

h) Education's ubiquity and universal accessibility

ICT facilitates electronic learning, also known as eLearning, by combining database technology with communications and interactive programming techniques. Individuals and organisations can participate in vocational or special interest training courses that combine formal instruction, quizzes, practical exercises, research, and interactive multimedia elements, all in the learner's own time and at their own pace, using e-learning platforms such as Coursera and Lectora.

Information and communication technology (ICT) in schools and colleges provides students with engaging, interactive, and self paced learning methods that increase their independence and involvement in the learning process while also increasing their levels of digital literacy.

i) ICT and Environmental Impact

With sustainability and environmental stewardship high on the priority list for individual consumers, governments, and organisations,

information and communication technology presents a two-sided argument.

On the one hand, while ICT is estimated to contribute 2% to 5% of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, these technologies also help to reduce emissions.

Aside from the physical benefits of less reliance on paper-based documentation, ICT aids in monitoring climate change, mitigating and adapting to its effects, and easing the transition to a green and circular economy.

13.5 VIRTUAL MEETINGS

A virtual meeting is when people in different departments/divisions/sections interface simultaneously utilizing innovation to achieve a common objective. Virtual meetings in general are easy to execute, and do not require as much planning time as an offline meeting does. Virtual meetings can run successfully if planned well in advance. In present times where the pandemic situation has made things complex, virtual meetings have gained importance because they can be conducted from the remote corners and at the same time they are cost and time effective.

Significance of virtual meetings

a) **Interaction with colleagues at distance-** Virtual meetings provide a unique platform to connect with those team mates who are based distantly or at various workplaces. Without the choice of virtual meetings, it would be extremely difficult to discuss adequately with them. They help in constant discussion and critical thinking of certain issues which an e-mail cannot.

b) **Meetings with clients or customers-** Virtual meetings have now become a 'new normal' when there is a need to discuss the matters of importance with clients or address customers.

c) **Saves cost and time-** It is an effective way to save cost and time of the organisations.

Platform for Virtual Meetings

In a business setup meetings are organized throughout the year. Every meeting has a different agenda, different participants, and different setups. Some participants will attend the meeting; some may like to see the recordings of the meetings later. Therefore, the organiser of the meeting has to look into various options before choosing the right platform for virtual meetings. Organizing a virtual meeting is not complicated but there are some key parameters to be kept in mind while choosing the right virtual meeting platform. They are as follows:

a) **Option to record the meetings**

This is a helpful device if some welcomed participant is not able to join the gathering due to any reasons or some participants need to have the

option to review the recording later to note down some important facts and figures discussed in the meeting. Even at times, higher management may like to see a few glimpses of the meetings for one or the other reason. In such cases the recording feature of the meetings can play an important role.

b) Chat options

Most of the meeting platforms permit participants to type observations and queries in the chat box. This is a useful instrument for a large number of participants like workshops, conferences etc. where questions cannot be taken up individually. The questions in the chat box can be answered by the professionals thus the individual queries, questions can be addressed quite well.

c) Sync the meeting information with calendar

Search for an internet meeting application that will synchronize meeting schedules with your day-to-day activities schedule. This is a prominent tool and will ensure that participants do not miss any meetings. This feature will also help in planning the time effectively as the managers can always prioritize their other tasks quite productively.

d) Feature to customize meeting rooms

Some internet meeting applications do permit customizing "meeting rooms" aligned with the organisation's needs. This can be valuable in case there is a meeting with a forthcoming customer(s) where organisations' strengths are to be highlighted.

e) Presence of engagement features

Internet meeting tools can consolidate tests, games, and applications to be executed for the meetings. These extra provisions are a colossal resource with regards to keeping the participants fully involved and engaged during the meeting.

f) Option to modify records

It tends to be amazingly helpful to discover a meeting device that permits you to modify reports with the group and team up progressively.

Ways to make a virtual meeting productive

Once the right platform is chosen, it is then important to try and make the meetings as productive as possible. This requires proper planning with agenda items in place beforehand. How can we make the virtual meetings productive? The following is the list of some do's which will help in making the virtual meetings productive:

- **Define the objective of the meeting**

  Build up the objective of the virtual meeting. It can be the complex issues which need to be tackled on an immediate basis or monitoring the group or to discuss some complex data information etc. Whatever it may be, it has to be itemized and placed as agenda items for the forthcoming meetings.

- **Decide clearly who is driving the discussion**

  While virtual meetings contrast from offline meetings in the way that number of individuals are involved in the discussion, it is therefore important to assign the task of moderator/convener of the meeting who can facilitate the discussion in the right direction without wasting time in unnecessary discussion.

- **Maintaining virtual gathering decorum**

  Since the meeting is virtual, the participants tend to be casual and may eat or drink or perform activities which may not be professional. Therefore, it is important that in a professional set-up standard norms be circulated to maintain decorum.

- **Select the options for choosing the appropriate questions**

  The moderator should be assigned the task to select appropriate questions to be taken up in the meeting.

- **Establish connect with the audience on one-on-one basis**

  Try to save a couple of minutes towards the start or end of the virtual meeting to connect with the participants. This act reassures everybody that they are being given importance which helps in establishing long-term associations with the stakeholders.

- **Keeping virtual participants on task**

  A meeting plan is practically pointless, if the participants do not adhere to it. To keep participants on task and engaged, a proper planning is important like assigning tasks to the participants. It can be taking notes, jotting down the relevant questions etc.

Advantages of virtual meetings

Virtual meetings have many benefits over offline meetings. These are:

- Harmless to the ecosystem
- Low cost
- Association with remote participants

Virtual meetings therefore are one of the constructive ways when we talk about the relationship of technology with communication.

13.6 TELECONFERENCING

Today remote work locations have become very common due to expansion of the businesses and organisations. This has given rise to teleconferencing where each and every team member who is even remotely located can be reached and can be connected. Organisations have realized the importance of communication as proper messages, information; facts and figures have to be communicated to all the employees, customers, and clients.

The way to connect two or more people using telecommunication services who may be evenly spread out in different locations so that any meeting or

communication channel can be established with them. Today's technology has equipped us with a variety of teleconferencing features that foster fast communication and allow users to collaborate, coordinate, and cooperate from remote locations.

Benefits of Teleconferencing

There are multiple benefits of teleconferencing that every business can reap. Profit maximization and reducing cost have to be balanced simultaneously thus relying upon teleconferencing certainly helps businesses in certain ways.

They include:

- Saving time
- Saving money
- Increased productivity
- Scope for face-to-face conversations with a video teleconference
- Fastening up the decision-making process
- Fosters collaboration and develop professional work culture

How to Set Up a Teleconference Call

Setting up a teleconference call with your team members or colleagues is quite easy, you just need to go through the following steps.

- Select a conference provider, which typically involves selecting a specific teleconferencing software provider.
- Then you have to create a user account.
- The information of the teleconferencing call should be texted or emailed to team-members and to a guest who wishes to attend the call. The details usually include a phone number or web access code, time and date.

Teleconference Étiquettes

Clients, business partners, stakeholders expect certain professional etiquette during business parlance. Some of the key etiquette during teleconference are as follows:

- Respect the time element i.e. be on time
- Eliminate all the distractions and background noise which may disturb the decorum of the meeting
- Do professionally introduce yourself after joining the call.
- Wear proper business attire as your clothes speak a lot about your personality
- Do not eat anything during the teleconference
- Do not override others' points. Be a patient listener as well.

13.7 VIDEO CONFERENCE

Apart from teleconferencing services, various organisations and business units often use video teleconferences to organize webinars, meetings, and various online events. Video teleconferencing is an advanced tool of communication. It is an audio plus visual experience that empowers the users to communicate with each other and see each other in real-time. Video teleconferences options are very lucrative for the business as it gives the freedom to the users to have face to face live conversations. Thus the various expenses like the cost of transportation, travelling, and various operational expenses are all curtailed.

Audio Conferencing

Audio conferencing is a typical telephone conference call that has been practiced for a long time now. During an audio conference, the attendees have to generally make a call on a specific number, dial in the code, and join a telephone call. An audio conference is a good tool to organize meetings, announcements regarding any new rule, changes in the policy, information about new products, etc. The only drawback of audio conferencing is it does not offer visuals.

Video conference equipment

Apart from having a strong internet connection, the team members who might be located remotely or far away should possess some basic equipment for a smooth, noise free participation in a video conference. The list of general paraphernalia needed for a video teleconference session is as follows:

- A desktop, tab or a laptop
- A separate webcam, in case of no in-built front camera in computer
- A microphone
- A high-quality headset to remove the background noise
- Any authentic and good quality video conferencing software

13.8 MESSAGING TOOLS

Instant messaging tools are real-time online conversation tools that aid in connecting two or more people. They provide the best platform not only for messaging but also facilitate smooth exchange of text, audio, files and content and video communication. A customer-driven approach is vital in every business and it has been observed for a couple of instances that messaging tools play a prominent role in supporting the smooth flow of information between all the stakeholders of the business. Instant messaging tools can help a business in various ways. Some of them are as follows:

- Connecting with customers and clients;
- Effective in generating new leads in business;
- Aid in providing quick live chat solutions and suggestions to the clients

Features of messaging tools for external communication

There are various messaging tools which are used for external business communication. Some are free of cost and some are specifically designed to communicate within the organisations. These applications offer following services depending on the requirements of the business house. Some of them are listed below:

- Texting, group chats, file sharing, voice and video calls;
- Setting up promotional messages to attract new clients;
- Enhancing customer support through live chat solutions;
- Messenger services allows the businesses to explore the power of instant messaging;
- New users can be directly brought in the conversation in messenger through scanned codes;
- Many messenger apps have ad auction features which can fetch a considerable revenue for ad campaigns;
- Some messaging apps have unique features like bots, secret chats, super-groups, and facilities to send files up to 1.5 GB.

Features of messaging tools for internal communication

There are many messaging tools which provide a more secure platform for real-time, internal team communication. Many apps offer free premium plans or free-trial periods so the best option can be chosen. These apps help in building a strong team.

- Offer an internal team chat along with flexible business solution features like dynamic productivity tools aligned with robust security, and strong administrative control.
- Voice and video calls, screen sharing, whiteboard solutions for smooth communication and collaboration within the teams.
- Broadcast messages which help in targeting and placing the product.
- Facility of unlimited file transfer.
- Customised chat spaces.
- Accessibility of all servers at one interface.
- Push-to talk option on the channel which can promptly start communication with others once the push button is pressed.
- Capacity to alter sent messages.

This shows that messaging tools are important for both internal as well as external communications.

Activity 2

Think of the messaging app you use the most. List out the characteristics of the with respect to business communication.

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13.10 LEAN MEDIA AND RICH MEDIA

Media plays an important role in communication. It can be rich or lean. The **Media richness theory** was developed by **Richard L. Daft** and **Robert H. Lengel** in the 1980's which describes a communication model whereby the communication media is characterized by its ability to carry and reproduce information sent over the available communication channels. Media richness theory defines different communication on the basis of its ability to carry information, ranging from **low (or lean)** to **high (rich).**

LEAN MEDIA *(information)* has very less visual information with a low interaction rate. Examples of lean media include letters, reports, memos. Email is considered a lean media, as the facial, vocal, and body-language queues are not present. Figure 1 shows how various media tools are positioned. The written media is the leanest and face-to-face interaction is positioned as very high on the richness of media.

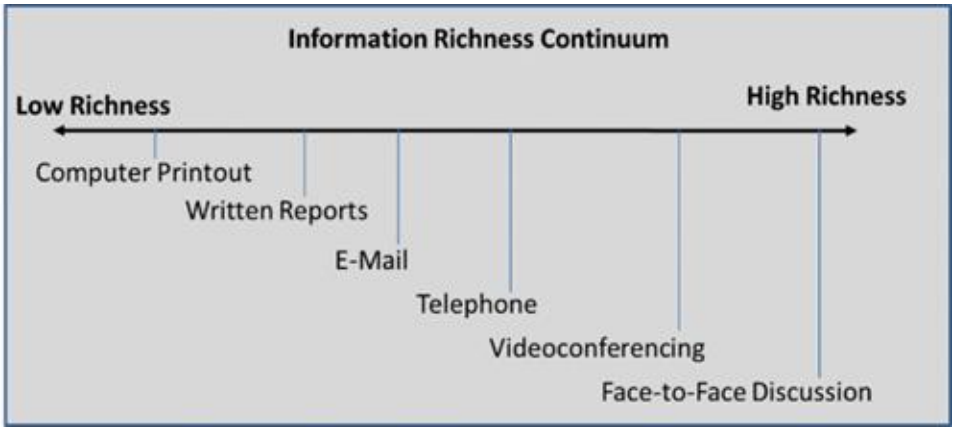

Figure 1: Information Richness Continuum

Source: Daft, R. L., Lengel, R. H., & Trevino, L. (2007)

RICH MEDIA: Market research has shown that focusing on intended interest clients is an important component of the progress of an organisation. In the changing technology-based marketing scene, it has become important for the organisations to captivate buyers to draw their attention with unique content. Rich media helps in this part in the form of advertisements. It helps the organisations showcasing their products through unconventional and innovative ideas.

Due to various reasons, rich media is an effective tool for promotion. The advantages of rich media are as follows:

- **Long association**: Interesting and innovative ways of creating and designing the messages have a strong tendency to keep the attention of the target audience.
- **Track-capacity:** The innovation behind rich media permits advertisers to follow the different degrees of commitment and association, including significant measurements like the quantity of developments.
- **Increased interaction rate:** Engaging the attention of the customers can make them stay a bit longer with the advertisement. Interactivity can drastically increase brand goodwill and brand awareness thereby influencing the purchase decisions. In rich media techniques potential customers can be strategically directed to interact with the online tools which can make them more engaged.
- **Rich Media ads can be measured:** A successful organisation is the one that can understand the behavior and moves of its customers. Rich media ads can check and keep an eye on even the smallest browsing patterns of their clients which can empower them with a lot of information about their target customers.
- **Higher performance levels:** rich media ads have an upper edge over standard ads with high conversion rates. It has been observed that consumers are more inclined to take action after going through a rich media ad as compared to traditional ads.
- **Enhanced Brand awareness**: As rich media ads are very creative and innovative, their brand recall value is very high. Due to these innovative, impactful rich media strategies, the brand awareness of the brand is bound to stay for a longer time in the minds of the customers.
- **User experience:** Rich media ads do not compel the users to drop or switch to another site.

Therefore, lean media and rich media have their own relevance in business communication.

13.10 SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT

Social media management is a well organized process of carefully analyzing social media audiences and developing a methodical strategy as per the requirement. Social media management includes designing of social media pages and content, monitoring the flow of online conversations and their impact, offering community service, and measuring, and reporting on social media performance. Nowadays. Social media management has become very important as it plays an integral role for any business. Different brands are exploring the social media platforms for new product launches, connecting to their target audiences, increasing brand awareness, and affecting the positioning of the products as per the needs of the customers. The scope of social media management has increased a lot and it has been observed that

many organisations all over the world are now hiring social media experts who are solely dedicated to design and increase the visibility of the brands and products on social media platforms. Understanding the taste, preferences, likes and dislikes of the customers can all be effectively measured and monitored with the help of social media platforms. The advantages of Social media platforms are as follows.

- Consistent connectivity with customers
- Effective management of multiple social pages
- Effective management of customized customer relationships
- Presenting reports to stakeholders
- Streamlining strong team collaboration

Managing Social Media Profile

The way social media profiles are created, they can have a tremendous impact on an individual or a business. Effective social media profiles can attract a good number of visitors to the created page. Let us explore the ways which we should keep in mind while creating an effective social media profile.

- Avoid creating a personal profile for business purpose
- Publishing mishaps with page roles are to be avoided.
- Include a recognizable profile picture
- Select a captivating cover photo
- Include a call-to-action (CTA) button
- Fill the 'About' section with basic information and add organisation milestones
- Decide the perfect timing and recurrence for the posts
- Use focussed messaging tools

13.11 SUMMARY

Proper internet and intranet connectivity have bridged various communication channels all over the world. Presentation of products and services using various online presentation tools have gained considerable importance in the past few years. Proper presentations positioning the products and services helps create impact in the minds of the customers. Proper presentations have a very strong recall value. There are many presentation software which impact the business in the long run. Today, faster modes of communication like video calls, video conferencing and instant messaging tools are transferring the messages in seconds all over the globe. The transfer of information at speed aids in the decision-making process and faster delivery of goods and services. Such tools have helped in saving time and cost of organisations globally. In this unit we have covered all these aspects to have a better understanding of the relationship between technology and communication.

13.12 KEY-WORDS

Internet: Internet is an open field and there is no central administration to it.

Intranet: Intranet is a private computer network but in order to operate it has to use internet protocols, network connectivity to access, communicate and share vital information within the virtual boundaries of an organisation.

Information and communication technology: The term "Information and Communication Technology" (ICT) refers to all of the technologies and services involved in computing, data protocol management, telecommunications, and the internet.

Virtual meetings: A virtual meeting is when people in different areas interface simultaneously utilizing innovation to achieve a common objective.

Teleconferencing: The way to connect two or more people using telecommunication services who may be evenly spread out in different locations so that any meeting or communication channel can be established with them.

Messaging tools: Instant messaging tools are real-time online conversation tools that aid in connecting two or more people.

Social Media Management: Social Media management is a well organized process of meticulously analyzing social media audiences and developing an apt strategy.

13.13 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Explain the difference between internet and intranet?
2) What do you mean by ICT? Explain the Importance of Information and Communication Technology?
3) Give an overview of various multimedia presentation software?
4) What are virtual meetings? How does it benefit an organisation?
5) What are the various points to be kept in mind for executing an effective virtual meeting?
6) What is teleconferencing? Explain its advantages? What are the various teleconferencing etiquette?
7) What is social media management?

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UNIT 14 CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand culture and its constituents;
- Interpret the differences between different cultures;
- Synthesize strategies for handling cross-cultural communication.

Structure

14.1 Introduction

14.2 Characteristics of Culture

14.3 Theories of Culture

14.4 Cross-Cultural Communication

14.5 Hofstede's cultural dimension model

14.6 Hall's Cultural Model

14.7 Cross-cultural Communication Barriers

14.8 Overcoming Cross-cultural Communication Barriers

14.9 Lean Media, Rich Media and Social Media

14.10 Summary

14.11 Keywords

14.12 Self-Assessment Questions

14.13 References and Further Readings

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Culture has a complicated manifestation, especially with the world consisting of nationalities exhibiting cultures that lie on extremes of the continuum of measuring culture. In the present era, when global business activities are indispensable, working with colleagues and/or clients from different cultures is common place. Irrespective of the industry that you belong to, ability to effectively communicate is the core for modulating businesses. Organisations are located in a world that is interconnected in all manners. The changing norms of operations, workplaces have spread to accommodate remote teams operating in different parts of the globe catering to a culturally diverse customer base and handling supplier bases from wide-ranging locations. Hence, command on cross-cultural communication offers an edge to organisational supremacy. The most interesting aspect of culture is that even though it has a complex constitution, there is an evident pattern that can be discovered and interpreted.

"Cultura " the Latin word meaning care of body, predominantly mind, is the source of the present word Culture. Culture is a complex compilation of

beliefs, customs, law, knowledge, traditions, etc. that a human being acquires while being a member of a particular society. Culture is something we experience by aligning to the people who have been a part of the culture. The most common definitions of culture include music, art and theatre as the integral parts. Culture could exist in various macro and micro systems and hence national culture, regional culture, corporate culture, food culture, traditional culture are common terminologies used to reflect the accepted and expected behavioural patterns of people belonging to a society. A macro culture could be constituted of multiple sub-cultures, like Indian culture is a blend of diverse cultural backgrounds. It can be applied to any human collectively or category wise. Culture has a significant impact on our attitudes and actions, not only on how we behave but how we expect others to behave.

For simplicity, the unit will use an operational definition which defines Culture as"inherent core values of a society promulgated through social interaction and teachings."

14.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF CULTURE

There are certain characteristics of culture which define it. These are:

- Acquired
- Collective
- Value system
- Stability
- Differentiator
- Contextual
- Common yet different

Now, let us discuss each of these characteristics one by one for better understanding.

Acquired

Culture is what we acquire from the individuals already experiencing the culture. These could be family members, teachers, school mates or colleagues in an organisation. They are groomed on the basic rules of language, body language, gestures, expressions as well as usage of slangs. Once acquired and imbibed, it becomes so much part of us or we are a part of it that we tend to use it only for differentiating between right or wrong or for being judgemental. Observation is an operative tool in acquiring cultural skills. It is rightly suggested that when you join a new organisation or shift to a new housing society or visit a new country, observe how people are doing things. This helps you grasp the prevailing culture there and you can attune yourself faster. This also gives a certain kind of exposure which makes you more broad minded.

Collective

Culture is not a thing that can be separated from people. It is something that thrives within people. It is a common way in which most people think and

behave. Since it is collective hence, different countries, regions, places could have drastically different cultures depending upon the collective understanding of the people in that particular culture. There is no right or wrong culture, it becomes what is best accepted by people constituting that culture. This may be something which may or may not be acceptable to people belonging to another culture.

Value System

Culture contributes to our value system. We tend to adhere to the core values postulated by our culture. This in turn tunes us to trust a particular set of values. Thus a group belonging to similar culture holds preeminent values. Individuals respect others who follow the core values as disseminated in the culture, for example, value towards saving versus spending; value of family oriented behaviour, etc.

Stability

The core values of culture fundamentally remain the same and stable over long periods of time. Any deviation from the core values may be reprimanded. Being a primer for our value system, being something that does not have a form in itself, is largely only shared and has only referential rules. Culture is something which if changes with time takes a long time to be imbibed. It requires considerable efforts to change the existing culture especially when we are doing so towards the betterment of the society. The minor changes in culture do not show a significant change in our core values. The changes in culture take time to be noticed and acknowledged and cultural consciousness is built over a period of time.

Differentiator

Culture operates as a collective set of mindful minds that is a distinguisher between members of one group from those of the other group. It is true that within the group the individuals would have varying characteristics, yet collectively the culture they belong to will significantly vary from other cultures.

Contextual

The manifestation of culture occurs through social actions which in turn experience varying contexts. Even though the context does not change culture, the interpretation or sometimes misinterpretation of culture happens during one of these fluctuating contexts. Since culture is complex and dynamic, there seems to be no method to accurately measure or assess it. There is no precise definition and no form that culture takes. It is represented by people belonging to the culture and interpreted by people belonging to the same or different culture. Thus the only thing evident is the consequences of culture.

Common yet different

There could be some aspects of culture that could be common between certain cultures and yet there could be demarcated differences. Certain

countries sharing the same language may project different cultures and vice versa. This possibly could be due to the reigns through which the country has passed. Certain clusters of countries may project cultures similar to each other. While interpreting cultures in context of communication process, an understanding of the history of the country can assist in making the correct interpretations.

14.3 THEORIES OF CULTURE

Culture is based on how it is perceived. There are commonly three theoretical perspectives in the context of which culture is viewed viz. functionalism, conflict theory and symbolic interactionism. Let us discuss these theories in detail.

Functionalist View

Functionalism refers to the perspective of viewing culture as a mode of smoothening the function of the society. Society is a system with its parts working in tandem with each other to create a whole system. Culture offers a bonding to this system. It creates a synergy amongst members of the society and offers a guide for making appropriate choices. Culture also facilitates in classifying the importance laid on various material and non-material aspects of the society. Culture inculcates what is deemed as essential and important for the society, for example, education in the USA.

Conflict View

This view suggests that society is constituted of individuals who can be classified on the basis of gender, class, race, age, etc. and hence there is an inequality that is created. According to this view, culture creates a demarcation, sometimes a discrimination for some people because of their value system. Culture, in this case operates as a norm, formal or informal, which benefits some people and hurts others. Hence, cultural diversity derived due to this delineation could be based on several fronts for instance racism, gender bias etc. Business culture varies from country to country, for example, business culture in the USA propels profit seeking as the primary objective of business. On the contrary, Korean and Japanese cultures seek consumer confidence and market share as the primary business objectives. People belonging to these cultures exercise the same sentiment while making decisions and running action plans. Thus, this view of culture promotes conflict of interest between individuals depending on which strata of society they represent.

Symbolic View

The proponents of the symbolic view assume culture to be based on the interpretation that people lay on the conversations they initiate. Thus this view emphasises face-to-face or one-to-one conversations more while deducing culture. It is suggested that culture evolves with conversations and thus is highly malleable and dynamic. It is interpreted as per the symbolism aligned with it. The people represent objects, individuals and environment during their conversations and culture develops as a product of the same.

Therefore, people belonging to different countries, regions or organisations will have different cultures because of the various ways in which they use words or symbols. For example, a season in which a large number of people get infected with viral infections is considered to be a bad season from the viewpoint of the medical fraternity due to more load on hospitals and healthcare workers. However, it might be considered as a good season from the viewpoint of the pharmaceutical industry due to the rise in sale of medicines. The most important factor about this view is that there is nothing like the 'right' view.

14.4 CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Definition of cross-cultural communication

It is the study of understanding the differences and similarities of different cultural groups so as to effectively participate within an organisation. In other words, it refers to the adaptations done by the people from different cultural backgrounds to make the communication effective. It is very important to understand the influence of cultural factors in a workplace in the present competitive environment. The better the cross-cultural communication abilities, the better is the work environment as it will avoid the communication gaps and make the environment congenial.

Need for Cross-Cultural Communication

Why is it necessary to understand the concept of cross-cultural communication?

It is important for the organisations to understand the communication patterns of employees and the stakeholders to be successful in any business. The ability to adapt, irrespective of cultural values, makes a lot of difference. While communicating with the individuals or groups from varied cultural backgrounds, the transmission of knowledge and the behaviour play an important role. It is therefore important to comprehend how culture affects communication in turn affecting organisational operations.

Elements of cross-cultural communication

Many organisations which go through the process of mergers and acquisitions across the globe face the communication gap due to cultural differences. Culture is deeply ingrained in the system. Culture is something which creates a sense of security. The way we portray ourselves to the way we do business, everything has a connection. It therefore becomes pertinent to understand the basic element of cross-cultural communication. These are:

- Awareness
- Preparation
- Language
- Humour
- Openness

Awareness

Every organisation has its own way of working. It is important that there is a common culture in the organisation which helps the employees of the organisation from different backgrounds to communicate effectively. This requires awareness about the different cultures and patience to understand the way the employee can be motivated.

Preparation

You need to be prepared at least in terms of greetings when you meet international colleagues. It is not necessary that you should know each and everything about their cultures but the fact that you at least tried to communicate in their own culture shows the concern. Hugs, taps on the shoulder, and nods are common in some countries but may be considered as harassment in other countries.

Language

Language is one of the most important parts of communication. Each country has its own language for the purpose of communication. India is such a vast country with diverse languages across the country. You can roughly place them in a geographical region and a social/cultural grouping as soon as anyone talks. To avoid misunderstandings, it is very important to understand the language, be it verbal or non-verbal. It is not necessary that if you speak the same language, the problem of communication is solved. Like in India, if you are speaking in Hindi, it may have certain colloquial words too which the other person who may also be speaking Hindi may not comprehend to.

Humour

A saying goes that jokes do not translate the true meaning. It can be true at certain occasions where a humour in good sense can be taken seriously and may result in conflict. Therefore, it is important that in cross-cultural communication unnecessary humour should be used with extreme caution especially at the workplace.

Openness

Apprehensive behaviour is common but there is no need to be shy about it. It is not a sign of weakness, instead it shows that you are cautious not to pass comments which may turn out to be inappropriate. However, it is important to be open while giving comments and the feedback regarding the same may be requested. This will help you and your colleagues to connect with each other.

The understanding of five elements of cross-cultural communication helps in building a strong and competitive organisation. Organisations that are culturally competent have policies, strategies, and systems in place to promote and encourage effective cross-cultural interactions in all aspects of human relations, including recruitment, hiring, and retention.

14.5 HOFSTEDE'S CULTURAL DIMENSION MODEL

Geert Hofstede and Edward T. Hall are the two of the most prominent contributors who have given some unique perspectives on culture in their theories. We will now discuss these theories in the following sections.

Culture has been deeply explained by Edward Hall, an anthropologist and author of books like 'The Silent Language', 'The Hidden Dimension', 'Beyond Culture', 'Understanding Cultural Differences', etc. where he suggests that culture is a form of communication, governed by hidden rules, that involves both speech and actions. He termed culture as a vast unexplored region of human behaviour that exists outside the range of people's conscious awareness. Hofstede defines culture as "the collective programming of the mind distinguishing the members of one group or category of people from others" (Hofstede, 2013).Based on research conducted in more than 50 countries, Hofstede identified a total of six dimensions which could be used to distinguish one culture from another. These are as follows:

1) ***Power Distance Index:*** This index defines the degree of inequality that is accepted and actually exists within people of a particular culture. Cultures showing high scores have an unequal distribution of power across hierarchies. In countries like Malaysia, Mexico, Philippines, etc. having high power distance index (PDI) scores, all actions have to be initiated from top. Guidance, advice and directions flow essentially from top to bottom. No initiation will happen bottom up. Decisions will also be concentrated at the top level of the organisation. Business processes may take longer due to complex hierarchies. Status, age, power, seniority are respected and the lower cadre individuals take orders on this basis. Subordinates do not take decisions or any initiative, instead will wait for orders to come from the superior. They will offer their suggestions only when asked for. Countries like Austria and Denmark with low PDI scores have societies where unequal distribution of power is not acceptable. Activities are delegated appropriately and decision making is faster as decisions are taken by people who are directly affected by the decisions. This means that your questions will be answered faster or your issues will be resolved easily if you approach the right person.

2) ***Individualism versus Collectivism:*** This parameter makes an effort to measure the propensity towards attributing achievements and designing connections to an individual or a group. Societies high on individualism indicate that more importance is given to individuality. For instance, in a society with high scores on individualism, success as well as failure is attributed to an individual. On the other hand, in a society with a higher score on collectivism, there exist very close ties amongst members of the society. There exists high loyalty to the group which they represent. They take care of each other's benefits, decisions and well-being. Countries like the USA, Australia and the United Kingdom are high on individualism and hence communication has to focus on individual and not group unlike in countries like Guatemala, Ecuador, Panama, etc.

where communication benefitting groups would be appreciated more. Individual accomplishments are appreciated more on Individualistic countries.

3) ***Masculinity versus Femininity:*** This attribute indicates who has the concentration of power and control in the society. It compares between a masculine work role model and a society which has low level of discrimination and distinction between genders. In masculine societies, men and women play different roles with men being more assertive, play dominating defined roles and demonstrating success. Countries like Japan, Hungary and Austria project high levels of masculinity. On the other hand, Sweden, Norway, Netherlands, etc. rank low on masculinity.

4) ***Uncertainty Avoidance Index:*** Countries can also be classified on the basis of Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI). This index is a measure of the level of ambiguity and uncertainty which is acceptable in the society. Countries low on UAI are more flexible and tolerant to a variety of ideas and opinions. Countries like Singapore, Sweden, Hong Kong, Denmark, etc. fall under this category. On the other hand, Belgium, Greece, Portugal, etc. are on the higher side of the UAI and hence do not tolerate uncertainty and ambiguity.

5) ***Long versus Short Term Orientation:*** The fifth dimension as suggested by Hofstede is Long Term Orientation. This dimension defines the extent of commitment to the traditional values. Countries high on long term orientation take a long time to change due to their long term embracement and respect to the traditional values. This is what is evident in countries like China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Taiwan. These countries invest in developing and maintaining long term commitments and relationships. This is visible when they deal with their customers, other countries, employees and all the other stakeholders. This orientation is very different in Turkey, Venezuela, UAE and Switzerland wherein the resistance to change is low and adoption and movement to novel things is swifter. They are eager to and less resistant to change.

6) ***Indulgence versus Restraint:*** Hofstede refers to indulgence as a tendency to free gratification of basic needs, enjoying, having fun and fulfilling desires. Social freedom is high. Residents of countries like Venezuela, Mexico, Sweden, Puerto Rico, etc. are not motivated by materialistic drivers. They are not status conscious, freely fulfil their desires, don't compare and are self-indulgent. Social status is of prime importance. Materialistic possessions and motivations allure the residents.

Activity 1

Develop a short story incorporating the learnings from Hofstede's concept of culture.

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14.6 HALL'S CULTURAL MODEL

Edward T. Hall is known for his contribution to the understanding of cultures. He coined the term, intercultural communication and suggested that in different cultures, individuals use different means to communicate which may range from using just words to using body language, touch behaviour and also para-verbal communication. He has classified the analysis and interpretation of how communication and interactions take place between cultures, under three categories i.e. context, space and time. Let us discuss these in detail for a better understanding.

Context

The context refers to how a message is communicated. In a high context culture, the most important part of the message is the physical context. This means that message is expected to be interpreted in the same context in which it is crafted. Extensive care is taken at both the sender's and receiver's end in creating and interpreting the message. Body language accompanying the message plays a crucial role and sometimes may be even more important than words. High context communication, using hand and arm gestures (kinesics), is more prevalent in Latin American, Asian and African cultures. United States and Northern European countries exhibit a low context culture where the message is constructed as it is meant. The message is direct and clear, reducing no scope for misunderstanding. The message is straight and precise without any adornments or unnecessary formalities. Challenges occur when individuals from high context cultures communicate with those from low context cultures. The low context culture people may miss on the important contexts provided by the body language along with the specific message and reduce the comprehensibility of the message. Largely Asian societies lay less trust on words, more on context, while European and other English speaking countries lay more emphasis on specific words and details (Kulich and Condon, 2015).

Space

Hall refers to space as the study of physical space and people which is termed technically as proxemics. It refers to the distance between the people who are communicating. Americans prefer to stand apart while communicating in workplace settings as compared to individuals from Spain and Philippines where people prefer to stand closer. This trait basically indicates how much one is ready to share their space with others in different settings. Communication becomes effective when the comfort zone is not intruded.

Time

Cultures also differ on the basis of how they handle time. In polychronic cultures, individuals indulge into multiple activities at the same time whereas

in monochronic culture, people tend to do one task at a time. Europeans and Americans, of monochronic culture, keep the scheduled time. All business meetings commence and end at the scheduled time. They strictly follow time even in informal settings. In case of any spillover of agenda points, another meeting is scheduled instead of extending the immediate meeting. Polychronic cultures, on the other hand, respect people and relationships over and above time. Time schedules are relaxed and they are flexible to overlap activities or stretch the activity beyond schedule. They prefer to finish the task at hand and can extend their time schedules to accommodate spillovers. Individuals from each of the cultures find it difficult or uncomfortable to switch to the other culture.

Table 1 represents a comparison among four different cultures on the basis of their business networks and relationship culture. New Zealand and South Africa have an egalitarian culture where everyone is seen as equal. Communication strategies are not power centric. Contrary to this are India and China where the relationships are power centric and while handling business, communication should be designed to route as per the flow of power. Similarly, prevalence of collectivism in the Indian and Chinese culture is represented through the sentiment of a group and thereby resulting in interdependent communication, as compared to an independent communication in individualistic cultures. New Zealand and South Africa are monochronic since they aim and achieve the single objective of achieving business transactions as compared to their counterparts who are polychronic and intend to align relationship goals during business transactions. This comparison is an example of how cultures significantly differ from few other cultures but are quite similar to some geographically distant cultures.

Table 1: Comparison of four cultures across developing business networks and relationships

Strategies	New Zealand	China	India	South Africa
Uniqueness	Social	Unique	Unique	Social
Replaceability	Replaceable	Irreplaceable	Irreplaceable	Replaceable
Interdependence	Independent	Interdependent	Interdependent	Independent
Disclosure	Little self-disclosure	Frequent self-disclosure	Frequent self-disclosure	Little self-disclosure
Intrinsic rewards	Tangible goals	Both tangible and intrinsic	Both tangible and intrinsic	Tangible goals
Monochronic vs. Polychronic	Monochronic	Polychronic	Polychronic	Monochronic

(*Source: Yunxia et al., 2006*)

14.7 CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Observation and interpretation are distinct when viewed in reference to cross-cultural communication (Barna, 1982). Barriers in cross-cultural communication can be classified under five heads as given by Hofstede (2010). These are as follows:

- Language barrier
- Nonverbal communication
- Stereotypes
- Cultural Bias
- Anxiety

Now let us discuss each of these barriers one by one in detail below.

Language Barrier

The knowledge of language is way more than just vocabulary and grammar. Your competence in language extends to acquiring the ability to know what needs to be said, when it needs to be said, how to frame it and why or why not to say it. Shallow knowledge of language may prove to be harmful, especially in cases where one word could have multiple meanings when used in different situations. An ideal learner would want to learn the language from a native who knows in and out of the language per se and its applications.

Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication forms an inevitable co-partner of verbal communication. This includes gestures, posture and demeanour which elevates the language and sometimes replaces words. This unspoken language has become so much a part of us that we use it not just frequently but also habitually. During cross-cultural communication, it is best to observe nonverbal communication that is prevalent. One should be aware of those gestures or postures that may be natural to them but may be considered offensive in the other cultures. For example, crossing of legs or pointing of index finger is treated as an insult in some cultures. It is best to reconfirm in case you are not sure of the meaning of any nonverbal communication of some other culture.

Stereotypes

Stereotyping is preconceiving interpretations about people belonging to certain cultures. For example, if we assume that citizens of one country are aggressive and unfriendly, we will interpret all their verbal and nonverbal communication that way only. In order to remove this form of stereotyping, take the individual on his or her face value and judge them as individuals and not just as representatives of one culture. Even after being part of the same culture, they may have significantly different actions. Culture being in a fluid state may take different forms and may be represented differently. There will

always be certain things that need to be interpreted outside the purview of culture. Relinquishing your set stereotypes and grasping afresh the cultural perspectives of another culture will help you acclimatize, appreciate and apply them during cross-cultural communication.

Cultural Bias

This deals with the predisposition to assess behaviour of individuals belonging to other cultures. There could be a propensity to assess behaviour as good or bad. Cultural bias is an integral barrier of cross-cultural communication. We tend to compare amongst cultures, primarily our own culture. The ideal thing to do in such a situation is to remove all preconceived notions and become aware of the other culture. It is not appropriate to classify things but to accept the way they are. Watching the culture from a distance and comprehending the bigger picture will help one remove cross-cultural barriers and assist in effective communication.

Anxiety

While communicating with individuals of another culture, most people experience anxiety. The unfamiliar experience causes stress. This anxiety and stress mounts further in case knowledge of the other culture is minimal. Accommodating the uncertainty of cross-cultural situations and maintaining scope of mistake will help reduce anxiety. One must also be assured that the blind spot exists at both ends and thus what should be expected by each from the other is unclear. Be vocal about what is expected in a good way to amplify communication and develop trust amongst each other. Requesting for small tips on cultural aspects can help both parties. Tolerance also plays an important role in reducing anxiety.

14.8 OVERCOMING CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION BARRIERS

Cross-cultural communication stands as a process which not only identifies and addresses differences but also similarities amongst cultural groups so as to effectively engage within a given context. It is more about adjustments that individuals belonging to different cultural backgrounds make in order to improve interpersonal and inter group communication.In order to collectively reduce all barriers to cross-cultural communication it is best to be more patient and tolerant during all steps of communication. Approaching with an open mind, without any prejudice helps both parties. Reiterating messages by checking if the meaning interpreted by the other person is the same as you intended will assist. Accommodating for things that do not immediately match your reference to context is essential. The most ideal act will be to pause during the complete process of communication, beginning from perception, interpretation and evaluation and most essentially before responding.

Flexibility in thought and action are the prerequisites for success today. The same applies to communication wherein ability and willingness to adapt is an opportunity to master cross-cultural communication. Cultural differences are

on many occasions complex and create anxiety amongst individuals belonging to different cultures. Acceptance is the first step, followed by flexibility to adapt without the fear to lose your identity. There is no rule book that one can follow to get started, it is the mind-set to embrace new ideas. The best strategy is awareness. Most of the cross-cultural differences can be classified as follows:

1) ***Language:*** The speed of language differs across different cultures. Indians tend to speak English faster since they are used to speaking their native languages at a good speed. People lay emphasis on different places in a sentence, thus hinting towards where the importance needs to be put. It could lay on important words or at the end of the sentence. The emphasis and hence the focus will have to be adjusted according to the language. This variation of focus also comes due to intonation and volume. Stronger intonations indicate intensified emotions while louder voices are linked to dominance and arrogance. The rate at which one seeks responses or gives responses also changes as per nationalities. Western speakers would instantly respond as compared to Asian speakers who accept silence as a response. Japanese culture also has very strict norms on speaking in turn. They do not accept conversational overlap and treat it as impolite. Accents at times operate as a barrier to intercultural communication. Individuals speak the same language, for example English, with different accents and interpretation in this case becomes a challenge. The most apt way to overcome this barrier is to articulate clearly and speak slowly. One should also consider knowing the exact meaning of words in different languages before intermixing them. The meaning of words often changes with the situation and context in which they are being used. Care should be exercised while using words with multiple meanings.

2) ***Written Communication:*** The formality involved in written communication changes from culture to culture. Latin and Asian cultures are very formal in their communication contrary to their counterparts in the UK and USA who believe in brief and efficient communication. In order to overcome this barrier, it is suggested that the format of written communication should be first understood and then executed. The style of written communication has to be learnt and not assumed.

   Electronic communication has made the world closer and may take different forms, email, voice communication, video communication, etc. Different social media platforms require different skills to communicate.

3) ***Listening:*** Both passive and active listening skills add extensive value to effective communication. This process assists in decoding messages and interpreting what is being said. The process involves receiving the message, interpreting it using a frame of reference, remembering or storing the message, evaluating the accuracy of the content and finally responding using verbal and/or non-verbal response. In countries like Japan, China and Finland, listening is a reflective process wherein the listener maintains silence till the time the speaker finishes speaking. This is their way of active listening and helps in absorbing what the speaker is

saying before responding. Silence in these cultures should not be treated as a symbol of non-attentiveness. Some listeners may tend to jump in the conversation before the speaker is able to complete his message.

4) ***Non-Verbal Communication***: This communication goes beyond words, sometimes complementing and sometimes replacing verbal communication. Non-verbal communication contributes a major portion of the message. It can take the form of gestures, facial expressions, posture, appearance, touch, distance, paralinguistic, colour or odour. Gestures offer richness to communication in several cultures. Japan and China are two countries where gestures are largely restrained and not used freely. Africans and Latin Americans use gestures and facial expressions to add emotional touch to the words they use. Caution should be exercised in how these gestures are interpreted in different cultures. Posture may add to the perception people have about an individual. For instance, standing tall is seen as a sign of confidence in the western countries but is treated as arrogance in the eastern countries.

Body language also requires to be understood with its norms. In order to interpret body language correctly,one should understand the postures, gestures, comments or situation.The famous wobbling of the head in India has different meanings depending upon the situation in which it is performed. It could sometimes mean no, while at times it is an act of affirmation to the speaker. The direction of wobble could sometimes be teasing and sometimes authoritative. One needs to match it with the situation, movement of eyes and sometimes movement of hands, to understand the accurate meaning of the message. Eye contact, technically called oculesics, is an essential part of non-verbal communication. Western culture promotes eye contact with listeners. Eastern culture, contrarily, suggests that direct eye contact with people senior or elder to oneself is disrespectful. Similarly, smiling at strangers is a sign of happiness in the USA but is regarded as strange and inappropriate in the Eastern cultures.

Touch behaviour (haptics) and facial expressions vary from culture to culture,so does para-verbal communication like voice volume, the use of silence, and conversational overlap. Touching each other most often indicates personal relationships. People embrace each other during meetings in Russia whereas Britishers prefer to avoid touching except handshakes. Firm handshakes during meetings are a sign of collaboration in most Western countries. Japanese, however, avoid body contact and prefer to bow. The extent to which they bow depends on the seniority of the person opposite them.

Figure 1 represents the strategies which one can follow to overcome cross-cultural communication.

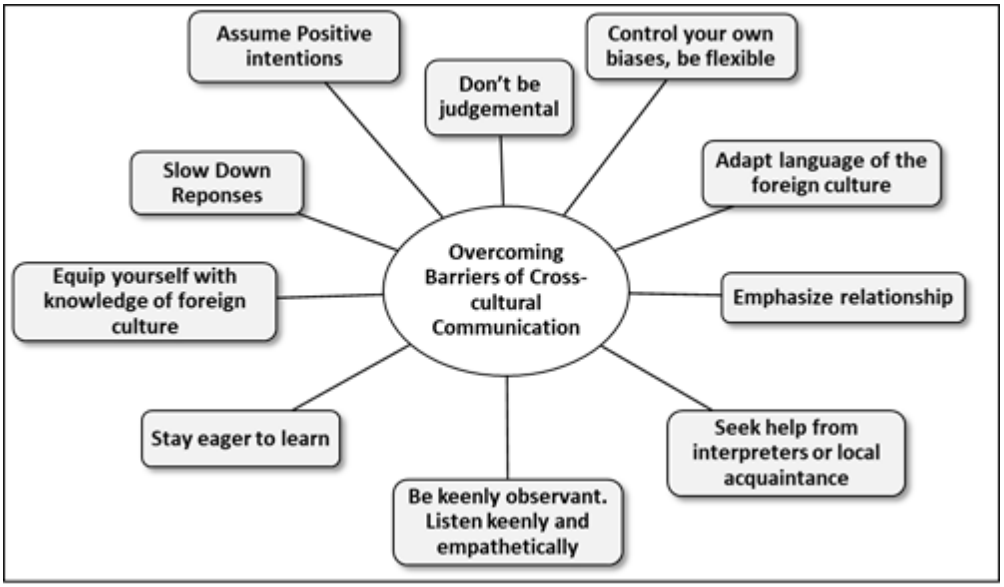
Assume Positive intentions
Don't be judgemental
Control your own biases, be flexible
Slow Down Reponses
Adapt language of the foreign culture
Overcoming Barriers of Cross-cultural Communication
Equip yourself with knowledge of foreign culture
Emphasize relationship
Stay eager to learn
Seek help from interpreters or local acquaintance
Be keenly observant. Listen keenly and empathetically

Figure 1: Strategies to Overcome Barriers of Cross-cultural Communication

It is often noticed that the cause of communication problems or misunderstanding, which could lead to conflict, occur due to cultural differences amongst individuals. Hofstede suggests that in order to overcome these cross-cultural communication barriers, it is best suited to interpret the conversation only after deep diving into the other culture. More than half the battle in building rapport across very different cultures is understanding. Observation must precede interpretation and attribution. The largest challenges are faced by businesses who as a product of globalization have to operate in multiple countries. The demarked differences between cultures are faced on a daily basis. This demands development of intercultural communication skills amongst individuals of both cultures.Cultural differences have an impact on how we conduct our relationships. They determine, in part, how easily we can build rapport.

Activity 2

You have a Japanese colleague, Ms A, whom you have known for the past so many years. You are currently working on a project with Ms A and have been giving time and energy into the project while also balancing other work too. You have a deadline to meet on Ms A's project, but it now seems as if you will not be able to meet the deadline because of some technical challenges. Your staff also has a summer vacation schedule. You know that Ms A will get upset, and that she has little respect for the fact that so many of your staff goes on leave at the same time. You want to reassure Ms A that you are doing your best and will sincerely try to meet the deadline.

Please e-mail Ms A to let her know about the situation keeping in mind her communication style as Ms A tends to value and express concern for others; social necessities, such as apologies for difficulties; a strong work ethic; and predictability and commitment.

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14.9 LEAN MEDIA, RICH MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Media has taken various forms thus providing different forms of communication. Lean media is media that is generally asynchronous in nature and thus sacrifices the possibility of immediate feedback and possibility of social cues during communication. Lack of visual cues or limited verbal cues could cause ambiguity in interpretation and with no chance to counter check the content, may lead to misunderstanding. Most popular examples of lean media include text messages, emails, bulletin boards, etc. While choosing the most effective channel for enhancing the effectiveness of a message, one must analyse the nature of the information that is required to be communicated. Lean media is most suited for messages that are routine and unambiguous.

Media richness is the indicator of the impact of information on understanding within a defined time interval. Richness relates to the level of learning the communication offers. Face-to-face, telephonic, live chat sessions are media rich as compared to email. Media richness theory relates to giving managers an aid to increase effectiveness of communication. Richness of message can be evaluated using parameters like capacity to include personal focus and immediate feedback, languages used, multiple hints etc. Messages embedded with unclear information with multiple interpretations should use rich media like face-to-face or telephonic communication. Information meant to communicate only pure facts can be conveyed using media which are low in richness like business letters, text message, etc. Figure 2 depicts certain characteristics of media.

Information Richness	Medium	Feedback	Channel	Source	Language
High	Face-to-Face	Immediate	Visual, Audio	Personal	Body, Natural
↑	Telephone	Fast	Audio	Personal	Natural
	Written, Personal	Slow	Limited Visual	Personal	Natural
	Written, Formal	Very Slow	Limited Visual	Impersonal	Natural
Low	Numeric, Formal	Very Slow	Limited Visual	Impersonal	Numeric

Figure 2: Characteristics of Media that determines richness of information processed

(Source: Daft and Lengel, 1984)

Social media uses multiple online platforms. It helps in sharing and collaborating information online. Communication on these platforms is crucial since organisations while communicating with other stakeholders build in a virtual image and equity. Today, the younger population procures most of their information through these social media platforms. The actions and reactions have been loud since information at times is unfiltered. There is a sense of urgency for receiving responses. Social media has also created a pressure to share something. This could sometimes create information that is not required. The language used in social media has become more informal, abbreviated, unfiltered, and emotional and oozes with catchy things that make the information viral. Social media has definitely given traditional media, run for its money. It offers options to brands to connect directly and personally with its audiences. Social media definitely is a powerful communication media with a huge impact in contemporary times.

14.10 SUMMARY

Culture is the inherent core values of a society promulgated through social interaction and teachings. It is acquired and collective. It has a value system and is largely stable. It operates as a differentiator between members belonging to different cultures and it changes with context. Some societies have similar cultures but a few are significantly different from others.

The theories of culture suggest three contexts under which culture can be viewed as functionalist view, conflict view and symbolic view. Hofstede's cultural dimension model suggests that cultures could be classified on the basis of power distance index, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance index, long versus short term orientation and indulgence versus restraint. Edward T. Hall has classified the analysis and interpretation of how communication and interactions between cultures, under three categories, context, space and time.Communication gets significantly impacted due to differences in cultures. These cross-cultural barriers could be due to the language spoken, non-verbal communication, stereotypes, cultural bias or anxiety. Awareness, acceptance and adjustment are the key to overcoming barriers of cross-cultural behaviour. In order to excel cross-cultural behaviour caution attention should be placed on language, written communication, listening and non-verbal communication which includes body language, touch behaviour, eye contact, gestures and space.

Lean media and rich media theories highlight the two different versions of communication channels. Lean media is suitable for unambiguous messages as there is a lack of immediate feedback. Rich media consists of telephonic and face-to-face communication where immediate feedback can be taken from the listener. Such rich media channels are suitable for transmitting ambiguous messages. With the emergence of social media platforms, various newer means of communication has become a rage among the younger population. Communication through social media platforms is much swifter and widely accessible. It is a beneficial tool for marketing and easy

communication among people. However, this can lead to spread of fake information and at times chaos.

14.11 KEYWORDS

Culture: Culture is a complex compilation of beliefs, customs, law, knowledge, traditions, etc. that a human being acquires while being a member of a particular society.

Stereotyping: Stereotyping is pre conceiving interpretations about people belonging to certain cultures.

Power Distance Index: The degree of inequality that is accepted and actually exists within people.

Proxemics: The study of physical space and people.

Polychronic: Ability to handle multiple activities at the same time.

Monochronic: Handling only one activity at one time.

14.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Evaluate the culture of the United States of America on the basis of Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

2) Assess two ways in which verbal language and body language may differ between different cultures.

3) Compare Eastern and Western culture on at least five parameters as proposed by Hofstede and Hall.

4) Explain the possible barriers that could occur during cross-cultural communication.

5) "Awareness, acceptance and adjustment are the key to overcoming cross-cultural communication." Comment.

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UNIT 15 ETHICS IN COMMUNICATION

Objectives

After studying this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of ethics;
- Evaluate the contribution of values to ethical communication;
- Assess the elements of ethical communication.

Structure

15.1 Introduction
15.2 Ethical Framework
15.3 Ethical Communication
15.4 Values in Communication
15.5 Individual versus Organisational Values
15.6 Key Elements of Ethical Communication
15.7 Evaluation of Ethical Communication
15.8 Summary
15.9 Keywords
15.10 Self-Assessment Questions
15.11 References and Further Readings

15.1 INTRODUCTION

As per the Oxford Dictionary (1963), the Greek origin of the word “ethics" means as ethos or the manner in which one disposes his or her culture. Ethics since then has taken different definitions. One such definition suggests that ethics critically analyses cultural values to ascertain the discourse as right or wrong and the intensity of the right or wrong. Truth and justice are two pillars of standard used as criteria for the evaluation. Ethics is an effort to evaluate the connection that an individual has with society. It further explores the role that nature and God play in this connection (Parhizgar & Parhizgar, 2006). While making decisions which are ethical in nature, individuals introspect their discourse on the continuum of good and excellent.

Ethics and communication has linkages since ages and ethical communication has been connected to behavioural conduct in personal and professional lives both. Adam Smith in his book, ‘Moral Sentiment’ (1759) has made contributions in building up moral foundations in the economic and political system of the society. He suggests that society and business require mandatory inclusion of morality. The issue of morality and society were patronized by Mahatma Gandhi from 1925 onwards while he rigorously worked for the upliftment of morality in the society. He believed that every human can get what s/he needs, but it can never satiate his/her greed. He believed that as the society modernizes, its ethical standards start to deplete.

Ethics is popularly visualised as a set of rules that proposes how one should conduct himself/herself/itself in a society. It operates as a guide that offers inputs on morality in our day-to-day living. It helps us judge whether our intended behaviour is justified or not. Ethics helps us differentiate between what is right and what is wrong. Since all businesses have stakeholders, as the norms are followed by the society businesses too have to follow certain ethical norms. In this unit, we will discuss the concept of ethics and how it plays an important role in communication.

15.2 ETHICAL FRAMEWORK

Let us first discuss an ethical framework and how it compares the means, ends and intention as good or bad. We will discuss the ethical framework as given by McCroskey (2009) as shown in figure 1.

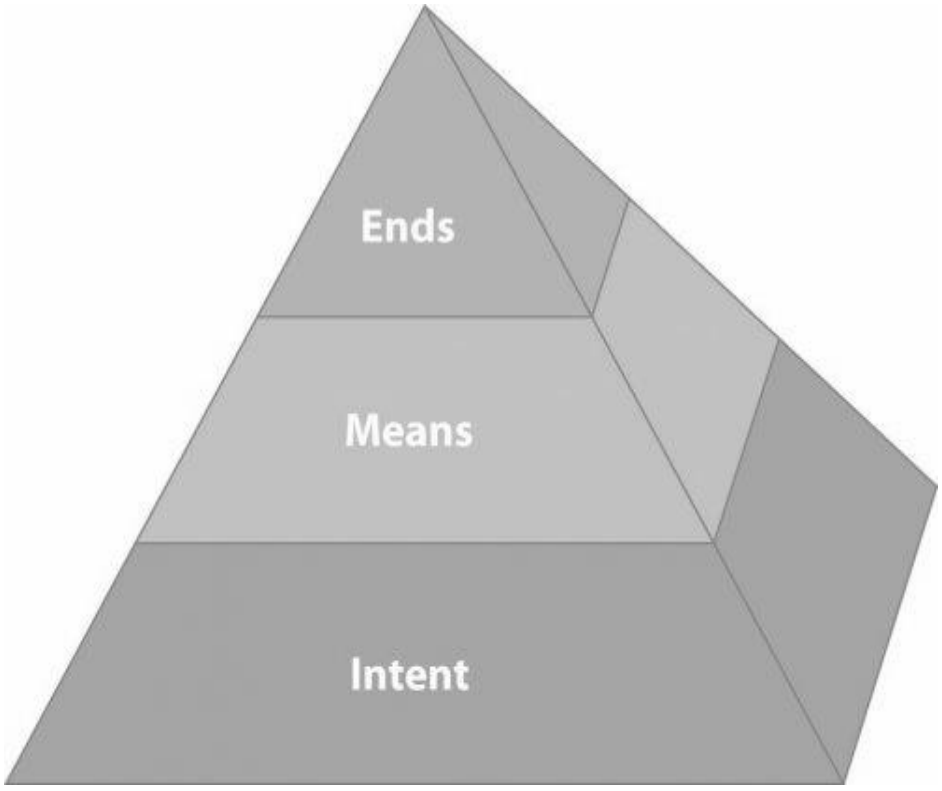

Figure 1: Ethical Framework (Source: McCroskey, 2009)

Intent is the parameter used to examine the ethicality of anything. During communication, our preparation, receptivity and inclination are based on the intent of the process. Behaviours which do not receive a consensus indicate that they are not ethical. Code of ethics offers a standard to measure the intended communication. Some organisations have a code of conduct or ethical guidelines designed to suit the organisational requirements while others follow the general ethical principles. Individuals may sometimes unknowingly indulge in unethical behaviour. Thus understanding and acknowledging the intent of action suggests whether it is ethical or not.

Means are the tools employed in order to achieve a desired outcome. The choice of action one makes could lie on the spectrum of good and bad. Even when the means lead to the same results, yet they can categorically identify the direction of the good-bad spectrum.

The outcome of the action, deemed as the **end**, can also be good or bad. The same end could be good or bad for different people depending on what role they are playing in the communication or action. Researchers suggest that while evaluating ethical behaviour one should ask three basic questions:

1) "Have I discussed the ethicality of the behaviour with others and come to a general consensus that the behaviour is ethical?"

2) "Does the behaviour adhere to known codes of ethics?"

3) "Would I be happy if the outcomes of the behaviour were reversed and applied to me?

In the ethical matrix, behaviour is considered to be ethical when the good end combines with good means, contrary to bad means leading to bad end, which tends to be an unethical behaviour in the ethical matrix. There can be situations where bad means lead to good end and this is termed as Machiavellian Ethics whereas good means leading to bad end is termed as Subjective Ethics.

Activity 1

Think of a situation when you intended to have a "good" end and employed "good" means, but you ended up accomplishing a "bad" end? Why do you think our ends are not always in line with our intentions?

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15.3 ETHICAL COMMUNICATION

Ethical Communication refers to the process of sharing information, which is created with sincere intentions and intended to provide honest information. This information will not be misleading and should be conveyed in a fashion wherein the information is complete in all respects essentially with reference to its context, so that there lies transparency in all formats and the receiver does not correlate the information to a situation where the same is not intended by the sender. Ethical communication is practised by all entities including individuals, societies, cultures, nations, organisations, government, etc. with an intention to foster reliable relationships while thinking and deciding responsibly while communicating. This form of communication ensures the establishment of individual integrity along with respecting people around them. Ethical communication increases the quality of communication by integrating truth in all forms so as to collectively enhance the ethical standards of the society in general and individuals in specific.

Principles to Ethical Communication:

There are certain principles of communication which when adhered to leads to ethical communication. These are:

1) To create communication, which is truthful, accurate, honest and has a purpose.

2) To provide an environment for freedom of expression, varied viewpoints and tolerance to non-agreement of viewpoints. This will ensure that the community that we are in has the ability to make fair decisions in light of all possible information.

3) To make extensive efforts in acknowledging and understanding the perspective and viewpoints of other communicators ahead of understanding, evaluating and responding to any communication from their end.

4) To assist in providing an access to resources required for effective communication as well as desired information for ensuring fairness to all which will uplift the general ethical standards of the society in general and section in particular.

5) To create an ambience of mutual trust and understanding wherever and whenever communication happens as a respect to the unique requirement and attributes of individuals involved in communication.

6) To denounce any communication that depletes the existence of humanity by virtue of its content and intention. This includes any communication that is distorted or intimidated, promotes violence or hatred and is intolerant.

7) To promote and support unconditionally the expressions of an individual, which are strong, fair and just.

8) To advocate exchange of information, opinions and expressions in the hour of decision making that influences the society. This process should be conducted while respecting the privacy of individuals.

9) All individuals involved in the communication hold the responsibility of the consequences of the same and do not blame anyone else for it.

10) To ensure that communication elicits a general sense of positivity.

Ethics in Business Communication

Information is the biggest asset for any organisation. This information, which sometimes may be sensitive in nature, should be managed appropriately. Confidential information has to be handled with utmost care; leakage of the same can cause ethical issues, which can affect the customers or investors and sometimes the company itself. All the stakeholders in an organisation seek ethical standards in communication. Ethics practised during communication are essential contributors to reputation building, avoiding legal issues and creating a general sense of good. Business communication should ensure adherence to few ethical standards. These are:

- Being honest
- Intending no harm
- Fairness

We will discuss these in brief.

Being Honest

Any communication that is developed should be honest. Communication could flow from top management to employees or from employees to superiors, or sometimes even between peer groups. The facts and figures should be relevant and correct to the best of the knowledge of the individual who has prepared it. Any confidential or sensitive information should be masked and revealed only to the intended receiver. For example, medical history or investigation information should not be made available on any public domain.

Intending no harm

The communication should be designed in a fashion that it does not cause intended or unintended harm to anyone. For example, while drafting statutory warnings on cigarette packets, explicit information on the fatal impacts of smoking should be mentioned. Hiding or twisting the information could cause a negative impact on the consumers. Hence this type of distorted information can be classified as unethical communication.

Fairness

While creating communication within the organisation, society or group, efforts should be made to ensure that all intended receivers are treated equally. For organisations should ensure such kind of parity at the end of employees, customers and society at large. Fixing price, bribing or insider information could be some instances where communication done could be deemed as unfair and instrumental for only a few individuals.

Activity 2

Do the following situations follow ethical standards? Give your answer in Yes/No.

a) Disclosing confidential information related to the finances of the company. Yes / No

b) Highlighting statutory warnings in television advertisements depicting certain stunts. Yes / No

c) Building a price cartel to harm competitors. Yes / No

15.4 VALUES IN COMMUNICATION

Values play a crucial role in shaping an individual's behaviour. Values may differ across different cultures, regions, countries, etc. yet there are certain values that remain common. These are the ones that operate as the beginning point for an ethical foundation. People value happiness the most and want to

avoid suffering. Love, kindness, peace, mutual respect and understanding are preferred values. The core values as promoted by the UN General Assembly are “inherent dignity” and “the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” along with freedom, justice and peace. Some common shared values and traits proposed by different experts include empathy, compassion, truthfulness, dignity, kindness, love, justice, fairness, moral courage, respect, care and humility.

Values operate as the beginning point for ethical communication. While designing communication that is deemed to be ethical, these values are used as standard measure. With different cultures, the priority or importance given to various values may differ. Human beings also differ with each other on the basis of their education level, gender, ethnicity, age, etc. thus creating a unique spectrum of combination of values for each individual. Even after this demarcated difference between individuals, there is a common emotional connection in communication. Each individual is unique with a set of characteristics, which shaped with the distinct experiences offers an interpretation of values, beliefs, perceptions, and needs. A similar sequence is also created for an organisation, which we call the organisation's shared values. We tend to behave in a fashion as we expect others to behave with us. Ethical communication requires an understanding of the value system, specific needs, beliefs and values of the individual one is communicating with. Every ethical communication should be contextual in nature in order to be relevant and meaningful.

15.5 INDIVIDUAL VERSUS ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

Most of the time, individual values extend to the organisation. Organisations value an individual’s values and in turn get affected by the core values, which populate the culture of the company and what the business stands for. This corporate culture not only influences strategic decisions but also the day to day operations including how employees are recruited, trained, treated and parted with.

Personal values are prioritised as per the choice and happiness that an individual derives from the values that s/he professes. Core values are the ones that have the highest priority for an individual. Here, the question arises whether the same values that an individual cares for are translated to his or her professional life? Personal values as well as corporate values guide an individual and an organisation while making decisions and contemplating actions. They demarcate one individual or an organisation from another. The major difference between personal and organisational values is that individual values are explored whereas organisational values are typically chosen, pre-decided and developed. They align with the organisation’s goals and assist in creating an ideal working environment for the employees.

This is where the concept of **value congruence** comes into picture. Value congruence is the compatibility of personal values of an individual with that of his/her surroundings. This has a positive impact on employee behaviour

(Hoffman and Woehr, 2006) which in turn leads to a better job fit. This parameter is also used while recruiting employees. The social media, company website and corporate publications like annual reports, all communicate the values propagated and followed by an organisation. Most organisations will have common values like integrity, competence, teamwork, autonomy, creativity, work ethics, professionalism, social emergence. Organisation should propel the enhancement of value congruence between the value of people and organisational values, while also making evident efforts in reducing value incongruence. This process is facilitated by socialization and information sharing activities. Creating platforms for communication between employees and co-workers, managers, board of management and other stakeholders. This develops trust amongst employees thus deriving more commitment from them towards organisational values. Transformative leaders make efforts to ensure that personal values are in line with organisational values to derive more commitment from employees. This increases their motivation and their involvement in tasks allotted to them. It can be concluded that value congruence develops and inspires effective communication and trust amongst employees and their managers/supervisors. Acknowledging and understanding the individual difference in values of people can help them manage them better.

15.6 KEY ELEMENTS OF ETHICAL COMMUNICATION

Ethical Communication integrates the essentials of communication which include the objective of communication, the message itself and the consequences or actions post the communication. The ethics related to the message are always on the forefront. The sender has to make a precise decision on what to say and how to say. With the freedom of choice comes the responsibility and accountability as well. The freedom increases when the communication is conducted within the closed circle. The choice of attentiveness and response lies with the listener. This freedom reduces during communication with strangers and is a challenge because the context and situation in which the message is intended and received may be different. This further complicates when the communication is happening in cross-cultural settings. Therefore, while communicating, the key elements should be kept in mind. These are:

- Objectives
- Morality
- Consequences

Objectives

Overall goals, values, emotions and perceptions influence how individuals respond. The process may also be influenced by the values, beliefs and the concentrated intentions of the individuals. The organisational culture creates an envelope where all these aspects are either subdued or intensified. The organisational structure creates positions of power due to organisational hierarchy. Some communications which are indispensable may not always be

pleasant. The individuals' personality in this case plays a deciding role in how the communication will be executed. The individual's choice to respond to difficult circumstances suggests the quality of the environment in an organisation and may contribute in shaping it in the future.

Morality

Being truthful is imperative but sometimes the truth hurts. Thus framing the communication without sacrificing the objective of communication increases the morality involved in communication. Using the subtle art of deception could cross the line of ethical standards at times. Therefore, it should be ensured to disclose the truth carefully and compassionately thereby achieving the fulfilment of constructive objectives of communication. There are times when individuals are in conflict between speaking the truth and hurting others. Ethical standards suggest that truth should be exposed through compassion and care to develop trust and understanding. Time and again it has been discovered that means are the end in making. Means hence should be devised to ensure that the end is achieved with high level of morality. For example, achieving a sales target early at the cost of lying about the safety precautions of your product, versus explaining the truth about the product attributes and to what extent the safety precautions will operate and then executing sale.

Consequences

The consequences derived at the end of the communication are a logical sequence to the objective and means of communication. It is quite possible that noble intentions and ethical means lead to unpleasant consequences. People initiating a conversation have to weigh the magnitude and direction of consequences that could follow a communication. For example, a news report on a scam about a bank drafted with the objective to create awareness and with truthfulness and transparency, may lead to grave upheaval amongst shareholders and/ or customers. It becomes the moral responsibility of the sender to evaluate all the aspects. Though it is difficult to appropriately predict the consequences on all the stakeholders, yet a thought on the possible consequences should be judged.

In totality, ethical communication should consider the intention or objective of communication, the means used to convey the intention and the possible consequences of the communication. Of course, there are more complexities related to ethical communication yet these three could operate as the most essential elements of designing ethical communication.

Activity 3

a) Identify any incident you are aware of where standards of ethical communication were raised or defied.

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b) Identify the elements of ethical communication that stand to be affected during such communication.

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15.7 EVALUATION OF ETHICAL COMMUNICATION

Most organisations at some time or other could face some common ethical issues. Using work computers for personal or non-work activities is a very common issue that organisations are facing today. This could be related to stealing also where employees do not mind using the property and time of an organisation for personal use. Employees also indulge in lying for various reasons like asking for leave, getting or keeping their job, getting advance money, etc. Creating false impressions at the workplace is another common practice. It is a common activity amongst employees to portray what they are actually not to get accolades and praises. Employees also get into the act of using organisational activities for personal benefits like getting a bribe for getting a contract signed for a supplier etc. Confidential information when divulged to outsiders is an unethical task. Similarly hiding information for personal good is critical. Taking an unfair advantage is a common phenomenon in organisations. For example, charging extra for products at the time when the demand is the highest. A very good instance was during the pandemic when the price of masks and some life-saving medicines rose obnoxiously. Knowingly reducing the efficiency and performance of an organisation can also be deemed as unethical. Stories related to sexual harassment, physical violence, emotional abuse are common at workplaces. Organisational abuse also adds to the peril. Employees tend to violate common rules of the organisations, e.g. violating simple rules of dress code in an organisation. Ethical dilemmas amongst workers also at times pushes them to make decisions on the wrong side of the spectrum. (Cherrington & Cherrington, 1992)

Ethical issues occur at a time when either the communication will have a significant impact on the audiences or is a conscious choice of means and ends or can be adjudicated as right or wrong. This process also includes ethical evaluation by the receiver. The ethical intent of the source and the ethical choices of the receiver are what play a significant role over and above the message. Ethical responsibilities vary as per the situation. The same individual might respond differently in different situations.

Redding (1996) has raised four questions that should be asked in order to increase attention to ethics. These revolve around the following concerns:

- The communication that is designed for different types of receivers. Which amongst them treats the message as unethical?

- Why is the communication treated as unethical and what are the parameters that are used for evaluating the ethicality of the message?
- What is the connection of the ethicality of these messages and the organisation culture and to what extent do they affect the culture?
- What are the repercussions of communication that is deemed as unethical? How does this unethical communication and other individuals or processes with others in the organisation and the society as a whole?

The study conducted by Reinsch (1990) has also contributed to the understanding of communication ethics. He evaluated the research conducted on ethical communication and arrived at the following areas of attention:

- The moral worth of communication behaviours varies with the set of people involved.
- Unethical behaviour evidently occurs in business.
- These unethical behaviour do give results in the short run.
- Communication ethics in business usually revolve around all functional areas of a business.
- Ethical beliefs guide the behaviour of an individual.
- Honesty and trust are the most significant parameters of business communication ethics.
- The demographics and psychographics (age, gender, perception, etc.) of an individual influence the ethical values, beliefs and behaviours.
- Both written and oral communication form a part of business communication.

There are multiple theoretical perspectives that a person can comply with while determining the ethical stand of communication. The communication ethics theories suggest how communicative behaviour is viewed and understood. Table 1 shows the comparison of these different theories which present a structured view to evaluating ethical communication as per Lewis and Speck (1990).

Table 1: Comparison of various perspectives on ethics and their application in communication

Perspective on Ethics	Foundation Standard	Application in Business	Application in Communication
Altruism	The foundation standard of this theory was developed on understanding if the individual's discourse has a good impact on others or not.	All acts of business, which could be classified as ethical, should essentially have a good impact on others.	All communication should have been crafted in order to leave a good impact on others.
Categorical Imperative /	The premise for this theory encompasses the	There is a demarcated set	Amongst the communication

Deontology	complete set of activities performed by an individual and categorizes them exclusively under good or bad. The theory is applicable to all moral duties whatsoever. There are no exceptions and no middle ways in practice.	of ethical and unethical behaviours for businesses. All businesses without exceptions should follow. Unethical business practices have zero tolerance.	conducted, there are some which are always unethical. Examples could be deception, bribery, falsification, etc.
Communitarianism	According to this view, the standard of ethical behaviour is to estimate to which level does the behaviour ensure the restoration of the compassionate social standards of a society/group/country.	All businesses should contribute in some way or the other to ensure that their acts contribute to the social good all in all. The business activities should positively enhance the relationships and compatibility amongst individuals of a society.	All communication transpired between individuals belonging to a society should assist in the building up structure.
Cultural Relativism	Cultural relativism indicates that cultures differ from each other on the basis of the cultural/legal system of an individual.	In lieu of the legal system governing business establishments, businesses are regulated by the law. Additional complexities are added by the legal standards followed by the society/ culture/country and the organisation itself which could significantly be different from each other.	Ethics in communication also is defined by the regulations set by the legal system governing the society/culture/co-culture.

Ethical Egoism	The premise for ethical egoism is the priority given to the individual and his or her own interest. This perspective promotes people to behave in a fashion where they are able to achieve what they want to.	Businesses also have stakes for which they operate. Businesses follow ethics as per their own vested self-interest and requirements.	Individuals set communication goals. They follow the code of conduct which suits their communication objectives the best.
Justice	The Justice perspective is founded on the standard that evaluates each individual on equal opportunities. Under this perspective each individual should be given the right to independence and chance to seek career opportunities. Those who are disadvantaged should be given priority in case of any chance of inequality.	Businesses should also align their decisions ensuring the good of all stakeholders. Effect of these decisions on each stakeholder should be individually evaluated and in case of any discrepancy, the stakeholder who are unprivileged should be given priority to ensure equality amongst all.	While professing ethical communication, people should ensure that the needs of all the stakeholders are taken care of and no one is ignored in the process. Flexibilities should be practised only in case of inequalities and in this case also the ones who are affected the most should be offered highest priority.
Nihilism	This perspective on ethics suggests that ethics curbs creativity. In the process of crafting new ideation, ethics enforces to maintain the status quo hence reducing the possibilities of new creation. The individuals involved in the process of creativity should stay away from engaging into the tussle between ethical and unethical.	Businesses are into the core activity of creation and hence they should adrift themselves from the conflict of good and bad. Business activities are required to be compulsorily productive in nature but not necessarily ethical in nature.	Communication has a set of goals for which it is designed. These goals or objectives should not be sacrificed on the postulate of being good or bad. All communication should necessarily achieve the core goal for which it is designed.
Psychological Egoism	The Psychological egoism theory suggests	Businesses have their own	Communication goals should be

	that each individual has his or her own motives behind their behaviour. These motives should be given highest priority and flexibility should be given in accepting the same.	mission, vision and working motives. They should proceed in behaving whatever it takes to fulfil their own motives.	guided by the motives behind the communication. There is no specific mandate on means instead the motive takes the front seat.
Social Relativism	The premise behind this perspective is giving importance to the interest of the people in and around the immediate circle like friends, family, acquaintances, etc.	Businesses are a part of the social system receiving and contributing to the system. Their behaviour should be based on what coincides with the interest of their social network.	Communication goals similarly be matched to meet the priorities as set by the social system in totality.
Subjectivism	Each individual differs in how s/he defines and practices ethics. This perspective suggests that each individual should be given the freedom to make his or her moral judgement.	Businesses also differ while they define ethical behaviour. What goes well with one is treated unethically by someone else. Hence each business should ascertain what holds ethical for them.	Individuals while communicating set their own goals based on what is deemed as ethical and unethical by each one of them.
Utilitarianism	Utilitarianism suggests that behaviour should be based on maximizing the interest of the largest group of people.	Business should be managed in a manner that it benefits the largest set of people.	Communication goals should be aligned with the good of the largest set of people. The Greatest good for the maximum set of people should be the motto.

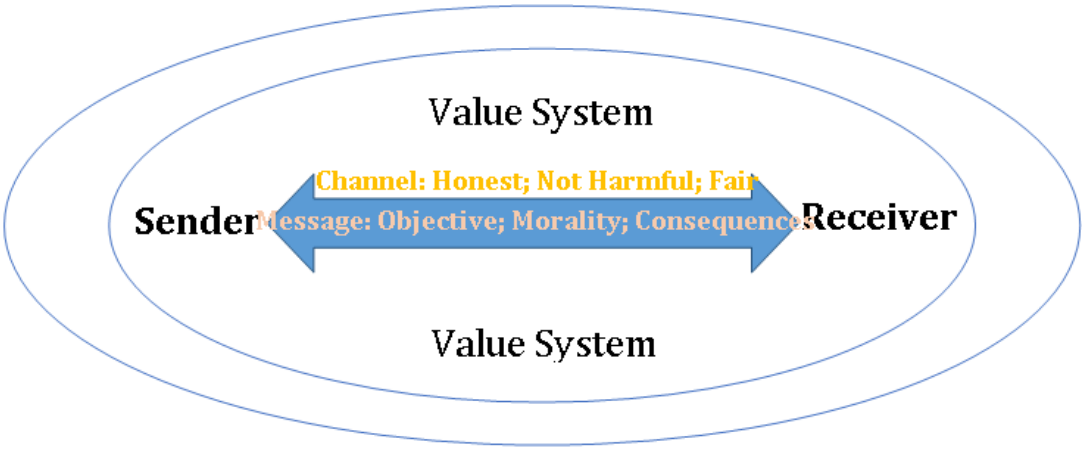

Figure 2: Model of Ethical Communication

Figure 2 summarises the concept of ethical communication through a model.

It can therefore be concluded that "ethics" is a difficult term and it is a tough task to segregate business communication between good and bad. Even when there are some given ethical perspectives, yet most of them are relevant based on the context and situation. Ethical business communication is a complex activity and takes considerable effort to reach a conclusive stand. The responsibility of the consequences of communication, both short term and long term are in the hands of the parties involved in the process.

Activity 4

Case Situation

Mr. Y, a teacher at a higher studies university, had been travelling for several weeks with sleepless nights. As soon as he joined his regular classes, he was scheduled to complete the evaluation of student projects. While sitting through the presentations, he got very tired from concentrating on one particular project. As an essential mandate to give feedback to the students, he made some very general comments and said that the project was just satisfactory.

Do you think his way of communicating was ethical? Support your answer with the ethical framework or any of the ethical theories that you deem reasonable.

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15.8 SUMMARY

In this unit, we discussed the concept of ethical communication and how it can be applied to the business world. Ethics and communication have meanings that are largely diversified. Ethics in communication refers to the application of ethical considerations in practising communication. It refers to the process of sharing honest information with sincere intentions. When practising ethical communication is also means that you will not tolerate communication that demean an individual's existence and human values by the acts of misrepresentation, terrorizing, compulsion, vehemence, partiality and hatred. It includes both internal and external communication. We studied that truthfulness, accuracy, honesty, and reason are guiding principles to ethical communication and acceptance to communication initiated by others before evaluating it is the first step to commencing an ethical communication. Values are the foundation of ethical communication and individual values influence and shape organisational values. Organisations prefer to recruit employees whose value system is in line with the organisational value system. Communication that encompasses the specific needs of an individual with compassion and understanding should be promoted. All courageous expressions should be encouraged rather than being condemned. We also discussed various ethical lapses that are common in modern business which include (1) purloin (stealing), (2)untruthfulness, (3) fallacy, (4) conflicting interests, (5) masking relevant information or exposing critical information, (6) duping, (7) personal corruption, (8) interpersonal abuse, (9) organisational abuse, (10) rule violations, (11) unethical acts, and (12) moral misbalance. To summarise it can be said that individuals themselves have the onus of ensuring conduct of ethical communication.

15.9 KEYWORDS

Ethics: Ethics is a set of rules that proposes how one should conduct himself/herself/itself in a society.

Ethical Communication: Ethical Communication refers to the process of sharing information, which is created with sincere intentions and intended to provide honest information.

Ethical Framework: A framework compares the means, ends and intention as good and bad.

Value Congruence: Value congruence is the compatibility of personal values with that of the organisational values.

15.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) Evaluate the role of values in ethical communication.

2) While working in an organisation, which values are more important for an individual, personal or organisational? Justify.

3) What would you do if you were caught in a conflict between personal and organisational values and why?

4) Are advertisements ethical? Write an elaborate explanation to support your answer.

5) Are the ethical findings in ethical communication valid for the organisations that rely heavily on technology? Why or why not?

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